

he ever finished the work, being so soon after taken from us.

A few days before his sickness in May 1728, I received a letter from him about a private affair, but before I could answer it I heard first that he was sick, and quickly after that he was dead; and thus to my great grief a sudden end was put to our friendly converse, and all his intercourse with this earth cut off. So much calmness of temper, so much unaffected humility, with so great knowledge and learning, together with so great a concern for the honour of religion, could not but raise his esteem to a very high pitch, and cause upon his death a lamentation with unusual accents of sorrow among those who knew him well.

I know the world have such a general suspicion, that great preferments are not *found* before they have been eagerly *sought for*, and that by earnest solicitations, mean submissions and compliances, and many artful intrigues, that perhaps some or other would have been ready to impute his advancement to *ambitious arts*, tho' *no other art* were used, but (what I wish more common) the art of attaining, and then giving conspicuous proof of, *superior excellencies* sufficient to deserve it. It is plain he did not greedily snatch at preferment, as men do at their prey; and as he said he did not solicit for *any*, so I am persuaded, he would not *spretâ conscientiâ* have accepted the *bighest*. Some others might have been more intirely void of such expectations, but scarce any could entertain them with more indifference and moderation.

I am very sensible the freedom he used with me was in trust and confidence, and therefore as I never utter'd the least word of it during his life, so being now all over, and he gone from off the stage, when

when it can be no prejudice to him or his memory, or to any other person, as I apprehend; I hope I offend not against intimate friendship or confidence in what I have here set down; and the rather, that it might appear with what views, what anxious caution, and serious consideration, he entertain'd any expectancy of an higher station in the church: and yet after all, if it had come to the critical point of a present actual offer, whether he would have closed with it or not, is not only more than I know, but I am apt to think is more than himself was fully resolved upon.

The End of the **SECOND VOLUME**



1225 e. 3.

THE
WORKS

OF

Mr. *Thomas Emlyn.*

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING,

SERMONS

ON THE

FOLLOWING SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Moral duties to be prefer'd before positive ones.

The design of divine patience is to give space for repentance.

Practical immorality worse than speculative infidelity.

True happiness not to be found in any earthly enjoyment.

Holy men from all quarters of the world shall meet in heaven.

Absolute confidence to be placed in God alone.

Our obedience to God must be absolute and entire.

Diligence the likeliest way to rise in the world.

The worship of God founded on the principles of reason.

The nature, end, and design of the Lord's supper.

Faith and patience, the way to inherit the promises.

Christ entred into heaven as our forerunner, and as our high-priest.

The suppression of public vice an honourable employment.

Funeral consolations.

LONDON:

Printed in the Year MDCCXLVI.

WORKS

OF

Mr. Thomas Emlyn.

VOLUME III.

ERRATA.

- Pag. 14. l. 16. for *complaint* read *compliment*.
Pag. 100. l. 15. before *There* place V.
Pag. 212. l. 16. for *their* read *his*.

FOLLOWING SUBJECTS

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291
Moral duties to be performed by the Christian way to
the positive ones. The design of divine patience
is to give space for repentance on the part of the
sinner. The happy man is not to be found. Pain and pleasure are
in any earthly enjoyment. They were born all creatures
of the world shall be subject to. Absolute obedience to God
is the only way to true happiness. Our obedience to God
must be perfect and entire.



LONDON:
Printed in the Strand.

SERMONS

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By the late REVEREND

Mr. *THOMAS EMLYN*.

Published from the AUTHOR'S Manuscript

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MDCCXLII.

SEERMONS

OF THE

Following subjects





T H E
P R E F A C E.

TH E author of the following sermons having been well known, and much respected by men of learning and moderation, both of the established church and among the dissenters, I need only inform the reader, that they are truly the compositions of that worthy person, whose name they bear, for the most part preached by him to a congregation of protestant dissenters at Dublin above forty years ago, and some of them preached a second time with some alterations at Barbican in London.

They are chiefly calculated to further practical religion, for though he was deeply engaged in controversy upon a very important article of Christianity, yet he chose not to make it the subject of pulpit discourses, nor did he ever suffer it to cool his devotion, or slacken his zeal for what he esteemed of much greater importance, real holiness of life and manners.

The P R E F A C E.

*As they were composed so long since, and designed only for a popular audience, in which exactness was not so much studied, as the making proper impressions on the hearers, nor were they intended by him for the press *; it will not be wonder'd at, if some inaccuracies should be found in them, and the same thoughts or expressions be more than once repeated: But there is such a strain of devotion and piety runs through the whole, such good sense and rational argument, such lively and affecting language, such an uncommon force and emphasis of expression, that I persuade myself, they will not be unacceptable to the serious and judicious reader, and may be highly serviceable to promote the great ends of virtue and religion, for which purpose they were at first composed by the author, and with the same design are now made public by his son*

Sollom Emlyn.

* Except the two last, which were printed in his lifetime.

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SERMON

*Moral duties to be presented
before positive ones.*

MATTHEW xxiii. ver. 23.

Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone.

THAT our Lord Jesus might advance truth and holiness in that generation, he found it necessary to contend zealously against the Scribes and Pharisees; the one is a name of office denoting the interpreters of the law, the other of a sect, they might both happen to meet in the same person;

B

person;

SERM. person ; however, we find both sorts frequent-

I. ly joined together, being the ruling clergy of that age, who not only most violently opposed our Lord, but indeed had wofully corrupted the people by their erroneous glosses upon the law ; they expounded away the life and beauty of the commandments, leaving only the husk and shell, and instead of attending to the true and substantial holiness of the law, the moral part of it, they spent their zeal upon the little appendices of small consideration ; and upon this trifling zeal had built themselves a great reputation of sanctity.

OUR blessed Lord on all occasions detects their hypocrisy, and denounces against them a wo of misery, while the people applauded them as the only happy saints. In this verse he exhibits a charge of hypocrisy against them, which he proves from the partiality and irregularity of their obedience ; some precepts of lesser use and of dubious interpretation they earnestly recommended and nicely practised, others of more intrinsic worth they passed slightly over ; they enlarged the ceremonial and contracted the moral part of the law, they were zealous in dubious, and indifferent in the unquestionable matters of duty

duty, and therefore did not deal honestly with the law, but made their obedience to be a gratification of their carnal hearts, and religion a servant to their lusts. SERM.
I.

THE case was thus; God had commanded *Deut. xiv. 23.* that every third year they should bring forth all the tithe of the increase of their lands for the Levites and the poor; from hence a question arose how far this should extend: some thought it only respected the fruits of the field and vineyard, or such things as were of valuable use for sustentance, and that the precept was not to be pressed so rigorously as to take in every little trifling herb of the garden, such as mint and rue, which were of little or no significance to the support of the indigent, and might be had at pleasure for asking; the tithing whereof was not only more troublesome than it was worth, but was very difficult so to be performed, that they might be sure they had gone through all, and had not missed some little herb or sprout, that they might sit down easy without any scruple remaining in their mind.

BUT these rigid interpreters of the law, instead of such a mild and equitable exposition, would needs show their religious zeal by

SERM. taking it in the severest sense ; they were nice
 I. and scrupulous, busy and vehement about
 these little and dubious points, boasting loudly
 of their eminent piety on this account, *Luke*
xviii. 12. I give tithes of all that I possess ;
 while yet they shewed no conscience towards
 men in matters of a thousand times greater
 importance ; took no such care to observe
 mercy, truth or justice in their dealings ;
 they had *so much* conscience as by no means
 to wrong the widow of a sprig of mint or rue,
 but *so little* as to devour widows houses, ver.
 14. They counted it uncharitable to withhold a
 few herbs from a Levite ; but not so, to kill
 the prophets, and stone them, who were sent
 to reform them, ver. 34—37. They would
 fast twice a week from a meal's meat, but
 would glut themselves every day with the
 gains of their extortion and avarice ; they gave
 a little alms with the sound of a trumpet, but
 silently made many beggars to need them by
 their secret frauds.

THIS being the case, it raised the just in-
 dignation of the holy Jesus ; in him was no
 guile ; he could not bear with silent patience
 to see such shameful hypocrisy practised, and
 the poor people deluded into a mistaken opi-
 nion

prefer'd before positive ones.

5

nion of their sanctity, and a dangerous veneration for such blind and corrupt guides. SERM.
I.

HEREUPON he, who taught the way of God in truth and cared for no man, arraigns the Scribes and Pharisees of hypocrisy in this article also. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone.*

NOT to enter on a large discourse of hypocrisy, or on the rules of justice, mercy and faithfulness, which would be besides my present purpose; I shall only take notice of some considerable directions for the right ordering our practice by a wise and orderly observance of God's laws; which we may take under the following rules, which are just observations or inferences from the text.

I. WE may observe that the living in the mere omission and neglect of those virtues and duties which are incumbent on us, is enough to render us criminals in the sight of God: For tho' these Pharisees had no doubt

B 3

acted

SERM. acted contrary to the precept, doing many
 I. positive injuries and forbidden cruelties, as well
 as neglected to do the just and merciful things
 required; yet our Lord exhibits his charge in
 the negative, *Ye have omitted, or ye have left
 undone, &c.* thereby to teach us, that how-
 ever it may be more heinous to act the direct
 contrary to our duty by vicious practices, yet
 not to act virtuously is of itself criminal.

THE great law-giver has not only laid re-
 straints upon us by forbidding us to do what
 is wicked, but has also enjoined us many po-
 sitive duties of piety, and mercy, and justice,
 in the several relations of life wherein we
 stand, which if we do not fulfil, we stand
 condemned. The barren fig-tree was curst and
 sentenced to be cut down, *Luke xiii. 6.* not
 for its poisonous fruits, but because it brought
 forth none at all, tho' it had been drest and
 manured; and likewise the vine-branches
 which bear no fruit, *John xv. 2.* tho' they do
 not bring forth four grapes, as some others.

IN the acting wickedness we are profane,
 but in neglecting to do good we are unprofit-
 able, and in both cases we shall be wicked.
 The slothful man who did not use his talent,
 tho' he had done no hurt with it, is reproached

as a wicked servant, *Mat. xxv. 26.* and as *SERMON*¹²
such was punished, ver. 30. And we know *I. 1*
the process at the great day is described not
by a roll of gross crimes, but after this man-
ner, *Ye did not feed, ye did not clothe, ye did*
not visit, ver. 43, 45.

IT concerns us therefore to inquire and
consider what duties and offices are assigned
us either as reasonable creatures and as chris-
tians in common, or as placed in our par-
ticular relations, that we may not carelessly
neglect God or man, but discharge a good con-
science towards both.

A great part of the world are very
unmindful of this; they are perhaps sensible
that to break the commands, *thou shalt not*
kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, &c. by
positive transgressions, is dangerous wicked-
ness, and these acts can scarce escape their bit-
ter reflections, as done in direct wilful op-
position to the law; but these men fall silent-
ly into omissions of doing good, live careless
of God and man, and think all is well if
none can say they ever did a wicked thing,
or injured any man; like the Pharisee, *Luke*
xviii. 11. I am not an extortioner, unjust, an
adulterer, &c.

SERM. 2 I MUST confess, as the world goes, this
 I. is some considerable attainment, and as our
 Lord said when among strangers and enemies, he that is not against us, is with us. The torrent of vice is so strong, and there is such plenty of wickedness, mischief, fraud, intemperance, and profaneness, that we are glad if we fall into the hands of such as are harmless and barely innocent, and think we are come off very well, if we live only among such neighbours, as will not be troublesome, rude and vicious; as will refrain their tongues and hands from evil, tho' they have not the excellency of shining lights.

BUT tho' this may content our neighbour, it will not satisfy our Lord and master; he expects active service and much fruit, that we love him and serve him continually, that our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, as well as see no evil ones; that we be blessings in our several stations, afford a bright and an alluring example to others, and even adorn the doctrine of our Saviour, not only by denying all ungodliness, but also by living soberly, righteously and godly in the world, as a people zealous of good works.

prefer'd before positive ones.

II. We may observe that even in the laws of God there is a great distinction to be made by us; some are of more weight and importance, of more intrinsic excellence and use than others. We need not fear the casting any odium or reflexion on the divine laws by making this comparison, since it is made by our Lord himself; here are the *graviora legis*, and elsewhere *Mat. v. 19.* he allows the *minutula legis*. As in faith and knowledge some points are more necessary and useful to be taught and believed than others, so in the commandments some are of more consequence and necessarily to be practised: Our Saviour speaks of a great commandment, and a second like unto it, he intends it comparatively above other commands; and no wonder God allows us to make this difference, when himself proclaims his own different esteem of these his laws. *Hosea vi. 6.* Thus moral virtues and duties have an indisputable claim to precedency, when compared with rituals and ceremonial institutions; insomuch that the holy author of those rites, tho' he had required them by solemn laws and upon severe penalties, seems in some sort to treat these institutions with little less than contempt. When
some

SERM. I.  some would with ceremonial piety have commuted with moral duties, *Who*, says he, *both required this at your hands?* *Isaiab* i. 12. Nay, if they would give him ten thousand times more of that sort, *viz.* thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil, he still disdains it with, *What has the Lord required of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* *Mic.* vi. 8.

NOR is this difference only between morals and rituals, but in a less measure a difference is to be made in morals too; of these our Lord speaks *Mat.* v. 19. where he calls some the *lesser commandments*; and we often find some parts of the gospel religion enjoined with an *above all things* do this and that, *Eph.* vi. 16. *Col.* iii. 14. and in a comparison of very eminent graces, faith, hope and charity, it is said the greatest of these is charity, *1 Cor.* xiii. 13. Only with this difference in the two cases, that ritual positive laws might not only be omitted, but broke to serve the ends of mercy, as the sabbath's rest and the law of the shew-bread in *David's* case, *Mat.* xii. but a moral duty may only be omitted to give place to a greater, when there is not room for both, but must never be contradicted by doing a moral evil.

prefer'd before positive ones.

11

I may do good to one and not to another, SERM.
when my ability extends not to both; I.
I may never do injustice to one on any ac-
count, nor do evil that a greater good may
come.

I would make this inference here in its proper place: Hence we may learn that the goodness or malignity of moral principles or actions does not solely depend on the positive commands or revealed laws of God; but that there are eternal distinctions between good and evil, founded on the intrinsic nature of things antecedent to revelation: for otherwise there would be no difference in the acts of obedience, since all his laws are enacted by the same authority. There would be equal excellency in acts of obedience to one as to another, if all their goodness lay in their being commanded; and God might with as much honour have said he would have sacrifice rather than mercy, as the contrary, since one had been as much a compliance with his laws as the other, and as good as the other, if their whole goodness were derived from mere arbitrary commands. But because from the nature of things (which also is the will of the great creator of all) there are some principles must

SERM.

I.

must needs be good, and some evil; command-
ed or not, forbidden or not, therefore God
has required the one, and forbidden the other
by his written law, as he had before by the
law of nature: and therefore he still esteems
one before the other in our observance, be-
cause tho' all be alike commanded, yet all
were not alike good; as in current coin, tho'
the same stamp be on many sorts, yet there
is great difference in the real value.

III. I PASSION to a third observation,
which is this, That among the weightier and
more important matters of religion, the duties
of the second table are to be number'd, or those
relative social virtues of judgment, mercy and
faith: These are the things our Lord, who
best knew what true religion was, expressly
commends and places in this high and noble
rank.

I. *Judgment*, or justice in giving every one
his right, whether it be in our own case, or
when we are made judges in that of others, as
these men among the Jews often were. Nei-
ther by violence nor injurious fraud may we
obstruct the just claim of any man, nor dis-
turb

prefer'd before positive ones.

43

SERMON

I.

turb his possession, nor withhold what is his due.

2. *Mercy*, in being kindly affected to all Men, rejoicing in their welfare; and forwarding their comfort, especially pitying their misery, visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, either with our counsel or our substance, or other compassionate assistance, by which we may any way ease their pained bodies or grieved minds; nay, we must be ready to prevent their misery in either. Mercy also consists in sparing those who have deserved ill at our hands, and on whom it is in our power to inflict it, forbearing and forgiving as God for Christ's sake forgives us. *Eph. v. ult.*

3. *Faith*, that is, faithfulness or fidelity in all our dealings; in opposition to deceit, treachery and falshood, acting in all things with such sincerity, honesty and truth, that men may rely on our engagements, and securely trust us without fearing any trick or evasion.

You see by the very mention of these virtues how highly useful they are to the good of mankind, and to make society sweet and safe; and therefore in our holy religion, which was given for the good and comfort of man,

SERM.

I.

and not to supply any wants of God, who is above all need, they are of high account and esteem.

YOU might perceive this under the foregoing observation, that in the comparison between several instances of religion the preference was usually adjudged to these relative virtues and duties, so far that the great God postpones his own worship thereto. *Mat. v. 24. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* As if he had said, God had rather wait for his homage, than you should delay justice and mercy, in being reconciled and making satisfaction to your brother; and he refused the Pharisees complaint, when they would honour God with that substance with which they ought to honour their father and mother, *Mat. xv. 6.*

SO that I think they mightily mistake the christian religion, who aim to sink the esteem of these social virtues, and to degrade them into the lowest rank; they weigh them not, I am sure, in the same righteous balance with our Lord, if in theirs they be found but light, which in his were found weighty.

BT yet I have not said that these relative virtues are absolutely the most excellent and noblest

noblest parts of religion, or above all the instances of piety and solid devotion, because I well remember that our Lord has told us that the first and great commandment is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;* and *Luke xi. 42.* He tells us this was one of the weightier matters pass'd over by the Pharisees, thereby teaching us that there is something more sublime, more important, and of more powerful effect in this grand principle of all religion, *viz.* a mind devoutly affected towards God, to have the soul deeply possess'd with an awful veneration for the majesty of the supreme being, before whose all-comprehending eye we and all our ways are naked and manifested, to be inflamed with ardours of a superlative love of him as the most amiable being and our best friend, our liberal benefactor and our endeared heavenly father, to dwell upon the admiring contemplations of his immense perfections, to serve him with inward fervours of serious devotion, and ascend upwards in the aspirations of a devout mind, to meditate in his law day and night, to be moulded into an absolute conformity and resignation to his will, and to live in the joyful expectation and desire of arriving at those heavenly mansions,

SERM. fions, where we may be filled with the fruits
 I. of his eternal almighty love.

THESE are the noblest exercises of pious
 love and of all religion, which are conversant
 with the most excellent object, and raise the
 mind to such an elevated degree of purity and
 strength, that it makes all other parts of
 religion easy; it is this quick and habitual
 sense of God upon our minds, that improves
 our own disposition, and is the living root of
 other virtues. The mind that, like *Moses*,
 is much on the mount with God, will cer-
 tainly shine beautifully when it descends to
 converse with men, and he who first loves
 him that begat, cannot but sincerely love him
 that is begotten also; I think therefore when
 this is allowed, the next place is due to the
 love of our neighbour.

BEWARE then of contemptuous thoughts
 of these social virtues, like the Pharisees, as if
 they were too low and mean an entertainment
 for spiritual men and believers. Say not these are
 common fruits which grow in ordinary soil with
 little care, for as ordinary as they may seem, I
 must tell you, they are no less than the fruits of
 the spirit. *Gal. v. 22.* and so *Ephes. v. 9.* (just the
 very matters of my text) as much as faith and
 hope

prefer'd before positive ones.

17

hope are, and not more easily attained; nay, they are the very image of God, and an amiable conformity to our Redeemer, who was meek and lowly, who went about doing good, and in him was no guile; they are a noble preparation for solemn approaches to God in worship, *Psaln* xv. 1, 2. and no doubt but he, who was here a zealous advocate for these virtues, will be an hearty advocate for those, who conscientiously cherish and practise them.

SERM.

I.

THEY much mistake religion, who make it to consist in forms and devotions, in notions and opinions, in rites and ordinances, and leave out the substantial virtues of truth, honesty, and charity: indeed he is the best worshipper of God who practises these virtues, for what is worship, but the giving honour to God, and shewing forth his glory by due acknowledgments? He therefore honours God most, who makes the worthiest representation of him to the world; and this he does, who is universally good and upright and useful, not he who abounds in forms and ceremonies. It is not by many prayers and vows, and abstinences, and censorious bitter zeal, that the excellency and goodness of God is

C

shewn,

SERM. shewn, so much as by him, who is merciful
I. as his heavenly father is, in steady goodness
 and diffusive tender charity; this is a becoming and amiable representation of God, beyond all that appears in the austerities, and formal devotions, of a false, cruel, and uncharitable man, who is for damning and persecuting all who differ from him.

I should now proceed to some further observations, but these must be defer'd to another opportunity.



SERMON

S E R M O N II.

*Moral duties to be prefer'd
before positive ones.*

MATTHEW xxiii. ver. 23.

Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone.

IN discoursing on these words, I took notice, that they afforded us several considerable directions for the right ordering our practice by a wise and orderly observance of God's laws. In the first place I observed from them,

C 2

I. T H A T

SERM.

II.

I. THAT the living in the mere omission and neglect of those virtues and duties, which are incumbent on us, is enough to render us criminal in the sight of God.

II. THAT even in the laws of God, there is a great distinction to be made by us, some being of more weight and importance, of more intrinsic use and excellence, than others.

III. THAT among the weightier, and more important matters of religion, the duties of the second table are to be number'd ; or those relative social virtues of justice, mercy, and faithfulness : I proceed now in the fourth place to observe,

IV. THAT he who would shew himself acted by a true spirit of religion, must have a conscientious regard to *all the laws* of God, both the more weighty, and the less ; for our Lord says, *these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone*, to teach us that our obedience is then sincere, when it is universal : By which it is supposed, he designed to rebuke a common erroneous practice of these men, who were wont to make choice of some one eminent precept of their
their

their law, to the observance of which they would addict themselves with wonderful zeal and care, in expectation that this should atone for their remissness, in some other points; Some selected the law of the sabbath, some that of sacrifices, by a very rigid observance whereof they hoped at least to balance accounts with God.

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HENCE the question was put by one of them to our Saviour, which was the great commandment of the law; in answer to which, our Lord directs him to one, or rather two, which comprehended them all, viz. the love of God, and of our neighbour, which bore the whole weight of the law and the prophets; thereby shewing, that no partial obedience, or regard to any single precept, would be sufficient.

I WISH there were nothing of this deceit still left among Christians; many of whom seem to affect some particular practices, or some favourite notions, with mighty earnestness and warmth; and yet are so indifferent in other plain branches of religion, as if they thought their neglect of these would be excused by their zeal for what to be sure they will count the great command. How-

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II.



ever, it is manifest, some who make great pretences to devotion, are very uncharitable; some, who are very beneficent, just, and courteous, are yet destitute of sobriety and temperance; and each value themselves upon their several qualifications, forgetting what they have left undone, as if by yielding in some points they thought God must not bear hard upon them in others. But if this habitual partiality would be accepted for sincere holiness, it were a very trifling attainment, since it is easy to pick out some precept which may suit our interest and humour; for that man must be very unhappily framed indeed, who, among such great choice as the laws of God afford, can find nothing that will sit easy upon him.

BUT this is no better than hypocrisy; for to observe only such laws, as we for other reasons like, is no obedience at all to God, but a false pretence; since if God's authority was the supreme reason of our compliance, it would reach to all his known commands: so that this is rather doing our own will, than God's, and is no better than as-
suming

suming a dispensing power over the divine laws, altho' it be but in any one instance.

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II.

I. WE undoubtedly can't be excused in omitting any great instance of morality, tho' it were but one. The observance of all the others, will be so far from excusing the habitual neglect of this, that the neglect of this one, will defeat all the rest, *Jam. ii. 10.* *He is guilty of all*, that is, he has enervated and subverted the whole, by subverting the authority, which is the foundation of all; for when a man is arriv'd at that contempt of God, as resolutely to prefer a favourite lust, and forbidden gratification to the pleasing him, all God's laws are disparaged, and stand upon a very precarious bottom, ver. 11. they are obeyed on courtesy, or if there remain any reverence for God's authority, it is not enough to cope with the superior authority of a reigning lust: We are rebels while we keep him out of but one fort; so that we can make no joyful reflexion on, or conclusion from our obedience, till we have respect to all God's commands, *Psalms cxix. 6.* Perhaps some may think, they have ground for confidence in such partial obedience, in that we so oft

SERM. find acceptance, and a reward promised to
 II. single virtues, viz. to the fear, to the love
 of God, to faith in Christ, to patience, charity, &c. But it is obvious in these cases, that those holy principles, mentioned for their great eminence and influence, stand for the whole of religion, and are supposed to be accompanied with all other graces, as flow from the same root; that he who fears and loves God, will keep his commandments, and will love his brother also; and that a true faith will not be barren or unfruitful, for he who is led by the spirit, will walk by the spirit: Otherwise as far as any of those religious principles may be separated from others, and stand single without the genuine fruits, so far they will not avail us to acceptance with God. *Jam. ii. 14.*

2. NOR is our obedience sincere, if we omit to observe the less weighty matters of the law, viz. positive rites and ordinances; for tho' they must be postponed to the more important moral duties, yet, when out of that competition, they claim a conscientious observance. The least of the commandments, is a commandment still; and if God have a right to ordain any thing, tho' it be what may seem as
 small

small a matter as mint, anise, or cummin; I see not on what principle a serious and reasoning man can neglect it. To say it is too mean a thing for God to require is, I doubt, to despise the command; for whatever he has thought fit to honour with the superscription of his authority is not too mean for us to honour with our subjection: Tho' the matter be but a ceremony, yet disobedience is not so; therefore we must beware, lest while we refuse sacrifice, we also refuse obedience which is better. If God says, as to *Naaman*, *Go wash in Jordan*, we must not despise the counsel, and say, *Are not Abana and Pharpar better?* For our own methods are as good; but, like *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, must walk in all the ordinances, as well as the commandments of God, blameless *Luke* i. 6. if we would be counted righteous before him.

V. THAT it is especially very heinous and provoking hypocrisy to pretend zeal for religion in its lesser and circumstantial matters, and at the same time to live in violation of its moral, and more weighty duties. This was the hypocrisy which now awakened the indignation of our Lord and master into these

SERM. these warm, but righteous reproofs and threatenings; to see them strain at a gnat, and yet swallow a camel; through fear of uncleanness to wash their hands in water, and yet to stain them with violence in blood; to talk loudly and honourably of the *temple of the Lord*, the *temple of the Lord*, and yet make it a den of robbers; *Jer. vii. 4, 11.*

THO' the holy God had oft declared, that the rituals of his own appointment were of *little* account with him in comparison of the substantial virtues of piety, justice, and charity; and of *none at all*, when in opposition to them, and that mercy is beyond sacrifice: yet a ceremony was so much easier than to live holily, and to slay a sacrifice than a lust; that they would have God accept the exchange, or at least the people must: And then so long as they were punctual in their rites, and costly in their sacrifices, did but wash often and pray long, were seen frequently at the temple, and at the corner of the streets, if not to perform, yet to expose their devotion, they would be sure to hold the reputation of their sanctity with the world, tho' their pride and covetousness, their fraud and injustice, made them a reproach to any religion.

ligion. This could not be without great hypocrisy, for if they really had any love for religion, they would love that which is most essential to it.

BUT it is not only hypocrisy, but of the worst kind, when it does not restrain men from immoral practices. It has been judged by some, that with respect to the honour of religion and the good order of the world, hypocrisy does less hurt than open profaneness, because it pays some homage to true religion, and represents it, as a thing truly excellent: but this is, when it goes no further than the appearance of those inward sentiments and principles, which in deed they are destitute of, but yet restrains them from breaking out into direct positive violations of the laws of sobriety, justice, &c. It is otherwise, when it prevails not to keep clean hands, and a decent behaviour.

IF the man under the protection of his religious character has his temper corrupt, and the more boldly carries on mischievous designs, acts cruelly and unjustly, or deals deceitfully with his neighbour; it is then that it gives the deepest wounds to the honour of religion, *Rom. ii. 23, 24.* it betrays it with a kiss, exposes it as if it were a treacherous cheat,

SERM. cheat, and an ill-natur'd principle, and makes
 II. it matter of scorn and derision to infidels; but
 } wo to him by whom such offence comes.

INDEED our Lord *Jesus* expresses himself in warmer resentments against this iniquity, than even at his crucifixion; then he opened not his mouth, he reviled not, he threaten'd not, but now he sharply reprovcs and denounces dreadful woes.

IF ever our meek Lord had any thing like invective, and pointed satyr, it was when he had a Pharisee to uncase; yet, it was not in random passion, that he used opprobrious terms and names, but he shews they were the serious dictates of just reason, by giving undeniable proofs of every censure.

HE never appears to have resented the faults of the Sadducees with all their errors, so much as this hypocritical wickedness of the Pharisees, and their misplaced zeal: Altho' the Sadducees were more erroneous in point of speculation, *Acts* xxiii. 8. yet see how differently he rebukes them, *Mat.* xxii. 29. *Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.* Their errors in faith, however to be confuted by just consequence, as we see there, and indeed of huge importance and influence, did not provoke

prefer'd before positive ones.

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voke our holy master, who well knew how to place and shew his zeal aright, so much as the base, proud, insulting, and imperious spirit and carriage of these orthodox, but unjust and uncharitable Pharisees. Nay, I presume from their principles mentioned, as well as from *Josephus's* account, the morals of the Sadducees were no better than those of the Pharisees; but then they did not abuse religion, nor deal so dishonestly with God and man; if their morals were naught, they did not pretend to compensate for them by such trifles, they did not treat others with haughty disdain, as their superiors in piety, nor encourage themselves to do ill from a confidence in their good works, nor in contradiction to their principles.

BUT the Pharisees, with all their wickedness, boasted of their knowledge, made great demands of submission to themselves, as the Rabbi's and Fathers of the church, of reverence and respectful salutations, of precedency of place, with many nauseous affectations of the praises of men for their supposed sanctity; and yet by doing all to be seen, it appears with all their devotion they were their own idols, and worship'd God that others might worship them,

SERM. II. them, and yet were neither just nor honest in their dealings: This preposterous dishonest zeal rendered them most odious hypocrites, so that harlots were fairer for heaven than they, *Mat. xxi. 31.*

OUR Christian religion indeed abounds not with such a number of rituals, or positive external institutions to employ our zeal about. To be baptized as a badge of our discipleship of Christ, and a bond to purity and newness of life, and to celebrate the holy supper, as a standing memorial of our great benefactor, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, are the two ordinances of Christianity, which no doubt were wisely injoin'd, and claim a conscientious regard: And yet if the chief of our zeal be spent about the manner of using these rites, rather than answering their ends, and more than loving the Lord Jesus in sincerity; if we are concerned to be baptiz'd into Christ's name, and yet return with the sow to her wallowing in the mire, zealous to eat in his presence, and yet be workers of iniquity; partake with scruple of the holy cup, and then make no scruple to partake of the cup of drunkards; and are more concerned at wanting some

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prefer'd before positive ones.

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II.

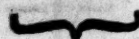
circumstantial preparation for a sacrament, than we are at lying, defrauding, or acting revengefully; if men reverence God's sanctuary, and yet defile his temple; are vehement contenders for faith, without that faith which works by love; for being counted orthodox in their faith, more than to be purified by it; if they remember the fourth commandment, and forget the rest; fast from flesh, but not from strife; are startled at the mention of heresy in controverted opinions, but familiar with the heresies, that are the works of the flesh, joined with variance, strife, hatred, &c. *Gal. v. 20.* is not all this gross hypocrisy?

IN a word, if we pretend a zeal for any thing in religion, but have not conscience enough to be honest, just, and merciful, we only seem to be religious, and our religion is vain, *Jam. i. 26, 27.* because, pure religion and undefiled, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

BUT it is yet worse, when our zeal is but about dubious points, and about human explanations and decisions, as was the case in the text about the extent of these tithes: Perhaps it was none of God's meaning, tho' the tradition
of

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of the elders had determined it; and what hypocrisy is it to be more zealous in doing, or teaching others to do, what we are not sure God's authority is concerned in, than what he has certainly written in capitals, both in the law of nature and revelation.

FROM what has been said, we may learn,

I. THAT there is need of prudence and wisdom, in the right ordering our religious conversation: We are bid to walk accurately and exactly, *Eph. v. 15.* not to be unwise servants. We have need not only to learn what are our duties in general, but in what rank and order they lie, that we may know which are to have the preference, when a competition arises by their interfering; otherwise we may often create needless scruples in our own minds, and by running into censure, may in many cases do ill by an indiscreet irregular zeal, while we think to do well: This wisdom appears in our Saviour's conduct as to the sabbath, *Mat. xii.* and the want of it in the disciples, when they would have call'd for fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, *Luke ix. 5.* and in those in *John xvi. 3.* who should

prefer'd before positive ones.

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should think, that by killing the disciples of Christ, they should do God service.

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2. WE may hence infer the great excellency of the christian religion, which is singularly adapted to promote these weightier matters. It has delivered us from the multiplicity of those Jewish ordinances, which too much interrupted and diverted that serious zeal, which was due to the substantial duties of religion, but was expended upon the shadow.

IT has moreover press'd these grand instances of morality with great emphasis and forcible motives. What a noble rule of justice is that, in *Mat. vii. 12*? *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*: So plain, that every man may understand it, and always at hand; 'tis nigh us in the heart, a rule not to be disputed. What a mighty place has love to our neighbour in Christ's law? It is the very darling precept of the new testament, and to enforce it, no mercy is to be expected for him; who does not observe it, *Jam. ii. 13*. Truth in our words and promises, and fidelity in our several trusts are not forgot. *Eph. iv. 25*. it is said, *Putting away lying, let every man speak truth with*

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his

SERM. *his neighbour*; and 1 *Thes.* iv. 6. *Let no man*

II. *go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter.* So that more of this might be expected from Christians than any, because, tho' they are founded on the principles of nature, which points them out, yet every man cannot so quickly come at them by a train of arguments, but the authority of God strikes quick and strong in the case; so that if men are unjust, and cruel, and false, the gospel is clear from blame: Indeed it may be the innocent occasion of ill, as *Mat.* x. 21. when brother shall deliver up brother to death, but Christians are the sufferers, and not the doers.

3. BEWARE how you apply this censure of hypocrisy. It would be too rash to carry it so far, as to condemn all, who may seem more zealous for some minute concerns of religion, than you think they deserve. If the Pharisees had only been minute in the tithing mint and cummin, and had not violated justice and mercy; if they had not made void the commandments of God by their tradition, their case and character had been much better.

IF any therefore, without neglecting the great principles of practical religion, place religion in some notions or rituals, in which there

there is none, or advance them beyond their due rank; yet if they are men of conscience in other matters also, desiring in all things to live honestly; far be it, that we should reproach them as hypocrites, that we should reject them, or so much as despise them. This was the case, *Rom. xiv.* about eating herbs, and keeping days; *weak* they were, but not *wicked*, ver. 10. We should therefore let it pass as an infirmity, at least we should go no further, than *St. Paul's* charitable jealousy, *Gal. iii. 11. I am afraid of you.*

4. T H O' social relative virtues are to be reckon'd among the weightier matters of religion, yet rest not in them as the only weighty ones. Two things especially are to be added:

(1.) A serious spirit of devotion, or piety, and love to God, as the first and great commandment; for this is the root and principle of all religious justice, mercy, and faithfulness, which would soon languish and grow faint, if not nourished by walking humbly with God. Make him the object of your habitual reverential thoughts; adore his perfections with humble admiration; let him be the centre of your delightful affections;

SERM. retire often from the hurry of this world,
 II. and consider what you have to do with him;
 { lie abased at his foot in renewed acts of de-
 pendance on him, that you may constantly
 have the strong impressions of this great being
 upon you, and live in his fear all the day
 long.

THIS devotion is a thing highly reason-
 able, and of great efficacy; it will rouse our
 slumbering minds, and impregnate the prin-
 ciples of religion with life and activity; it
 is always most important for the purifying
 and improving our own temper, and when
 the tree is thus made good, others will soon
 find the fruits to be so too. Let God there-
 fore be the daily meditation of your hearts.

(2.) WE Christians must add hereto, faith
 in the Lord Jesus, which is to us an essential
 part of religion. To glorify God in Christ,
 by believing in him, by doing all in his
 name, and expecting all through his media-
 tion, is what nature has not taught, but
 grace has revealed. Our faith in Christ gives
 us such noble arguments and powerful mo-
 tives to every good work, that we have great ad-
 vantages above the Jews themselves; therefore
 the Apostle in 2 *Tim.* iii. 15. plainly supposes
 some

some sort of defect or weakness in the Jewish religion for salvation, which needed to be compleated by gospel faith; for it is of old-testament Scriptures he speaks, that *they were able to make wise unto salvation*, (not completely of themselves, but) *through faith, which is in Christ Jesus*; so that what was wanted for perfecting the man of God in every good work was supplied by the gospel.

5. Let us all be directed where to exert our zeal, and in what to exercise it: else, if we only talk of these virtues with large encomiums, and do not put them in practice, what are we the better? We mutually stand in need of them; since we are so much dependent on each other, therefore God has wrought them into our frame; they are of extensive use in all places, businesses, and stations, and most strongly affect the honour of God and religion.

LET us therefore be strictly careful, that, while we do the other smaller matters of religion, we do not leave these weightier ones undone.

The first of these is the fact that the
 world is not a uniform whole, but is
 divided into many different parts, each
 with its own peculiar characteristics.
 The second is the fact that the world
 is not a static whole, but is constantly
 changing and developing. The third is
 the fact that the world is not a
 simple whole, but is a complex whole,
 with many different parts and many
 different relationships between them.

S E R M O N III.

*The design of divine patience
is to give space for repentance.*

REV. ii. 21.

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not.

THE instructions, which our Lord Jesus sends to the churches of *Asia*, are so important, and of such universal application and use, that he summons all to audience and attention, ver. 29. *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.* And oh! that every one, who has an ear to hear any thing, would seriously hearken to what the spirit here says; especially the careless

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sinner, who is mispending his repenting time, and comes particularly under this heavy charge.

THE words are part of our Lord's message to the church of *Thyatira*, who had a few things against this church amidst his great commendations of her fidelity, diligence, and proficiency in religion: Her fault was, that she too much suffer'd, (that is, by too much countenancing, or at least not enough disowning) that woman *Jezabel* to seduce into fornication and idolatry. Some suppose this name belonged to a whole sect of seducers, but I see no reason for it; it might be some particular woman, who pretended to be a prophetess, and was named *Jezabel* by way of infamy, because like to her in bringing in idolatry and unclean practices: but then having described her corrupt principles, he turns his rebuke to her, and as a preface to his severe threatnings, he sets forth the aggravation of her sin by the charge in the text, that when he had forbore so long to give her an opportunity of repenting, she repented not at all: *I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not.* From which words

is to give space for repentance.

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words I intend to discourse of these two points. SERM.
III.

I. THE great advantages, which almighty God affords to finners by allowing them an opportunity of repentance.

II. The great folly, the inexcusable guilt, and deplorable misery of finners in the loss of this opportunity, when they repent not.

I. THE great advantages afforded to finners by allowing them opportunities for repentance: Under this head two things are to be observed.

I. THAT offending finners are admitted to a recovery from their unhappy state by sin upon serious repentance.

THO' *Jezabel* had committed fornication, yet our Lord expected and called for her repentance in order to avert his provoked anger, which shews, that not only in ordinary cases of common infirmities and inadvertencies repentance will gain acceptance with God, but that even in other articles of a more heinous nature, where the sin is of a deeper dye, even there the sacrifices of a broken and a penitent mind he will not despise. *Psalms* li. 17. How repugnant soever wickedness is to

SERM. to his nature, and how much soever it lays us

III.  exposed to his vengeance, yet it is not inexorable vengeance, such as no repentance can move, but leaves room and encouragement for the sinner's coming to a better mind. *Psalm cxxx. 4.*

IN vain were repentance so earnestly required, and the sinner address'd to with such importunate solicitations to return, if there were no advantage to be gained by it; and therefore it was but natural to join the preaching of repentance and remission of sins together, *Luke. xxiv. 47.* The sinner cannot say, *There is no hope, therefore I may as well go on in my evil ways;* but contrariwise, if he cease to do evil, tho' he have done a great deal, he may yet do well, *Isai. i. 16.* The prodigal son undutifully left his father's house and service to indulge his sinful lusts; yet when he returned humbly and with a better mind, he was taken in again with the marks of great affection.

INNOCENCY is certainly better than repentance, but when any have lost the one, it is an inestimable advantage to repair that loss by the other; it is better not to suffer shipwreck, but in such a misfortune it is an happy escape by some plank to recover the desired shore.

is to give space for repentance.

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shore. This remedy the divine pity allow'd the offender of old, *Ezek. xviii. 27.* and more fully under the grace of the gospel, where repentance is now to be accompanied with faith in Christ Jesus, *Acts xx. 21.*

INDEED it seems reasonable to expect this mercy of God from the natural notions of his boundless goodness: for tho' it be requisite that every disobedience to his righteous commands should subject the transgressor to punishment, since moral agents cannot be governed but by laws, nor those laws be without a suitable sanction of threats; yet one cannot but hope that a benign being, who has commanded and inspired his creatures with such sentiments of compassion towards a relenting brother, no longer our enemy, will not always be inexorable to his creatures, who sincerely lay down their enmity, lament their disobedience and his displeasure, and with great duty and affection return to his service: I cannot think it was ever otherwise.

IT is often said, and by many, that God established with our first parents a covenant of works, by which every the least transgression was damnable, and no repentance available to mercy; but I see no proof of any such matter

SERM. matter in scripture. Indeed for the presumptuous crime of eating the forbidden fruit in defiance of a solemn command, which had been given to preserve the sovereignty of their maker, they were threaten'd with death; but it no where appears, that every error or defect below that would have expos'd them to that death, much less to eternal damnation; or if they had stopt at the first irregular desire, they would not have been pardoned upon repentance in consistency with that law. I am not fond of believing that a good God would deal so severely with his creatures, who, tho' innocent and pure, were yet plainly frail, unless I saw it well attested.

BUT however that matter be, we are fully assured, that in all other dispensations God has made the matter clear, that true repentance restores the sinner to his favour, so that, tho' he may chasten his iniquity with the rod of correction in this life, yet in the next his loving kindness shall not depart from him, but he will take away his iniquity, and receive him graciously, even tho' once he were in his own sense the chief of sinners. Those words therefore in the *Acts* iii. 19. *Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted*

is to give space for repentance.

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blotted out, is the voice of God to them, who have grievously offended; and is the first thing included under this head.

2. THE second favour is, that offending sinners have usually space and time allowed them in abundance for this very reason, that they may repent and recover.

THAT they have this space through the riches of God's forbearance, we see and know; the world is full of such instances, as it is of living sinners, who of the Lord's mercies are not yet consumed. Tho' the great governour of the world has declared no fixt rule or measure, what time he will afford such offender, and we sometimes see instances, where men perish by a swift and early destruction, when judgment lingers not, nor does damnation slumber; yet we must needs observe, what a long course in sin some run, and after many heinous crimes unrepented of continue as before. They have sinned unto death, *i. e.* the most deadly damning sins, and still live in appearance at ease and liberty, tho' they have greatly dared the vengeance of the Almighty; and after they have contracted great guilt, and are many thousand talents in arrear to divine justice, yet they walk about secure, as
fearing

SERM. fearing no arrest; so that, as was said of *Israel*,
 III. forty years long God has been grieved with
 them before he swears peremptorily in his
 wrath against them.

THO' the reasonable suggestions of justice
 are, *Cut them down, they cumber the ground*,
 they annoy, they corrupt the place where they
 are; yet he listens easily to the voice of inter-
 cession, and tries them a few years more, so
 that they grow old in sin not merely through
 accident or the strength of their constitution,
 but because he holds their souls in life, and
 heals their diseases, that they may have space
 and time for repentance. Here is then a great
 deal of leisure for reflexion and instruction,
 for a man to consider his ways, and to break
 off his sins, to undo them in their effects as
 far as may be, and to retrieve all again, to re-
 cover the favour of God, the peace of his own
 mind, and future hopes.

BUT this is not all which is intended,
 namely, that we have time allow'd, which
 may suffice for repentance, and may serve
 for that purpose as well as others, if we will
 so use it; but that it is for this end expressly,
 that God spares us, and with this view, that
 we should amend and grow better. He would

is to give space for repentance.

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III

have us know it, that it is not merely for the present delight in the grateful relish we have of life, or for gratifying our sensual desires, or pursuing our worldly projects, that he preserves our lives, but that we may have time to grow wiser and better, to heal our backslidings, and to mortify our vicious lusts and passions, which debase our minds, disturb our peace, and make us unfit for any comfortable being in another world. So St. Peter tells us, 2d Epist. iii. 9. *God is long-suffering, because he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* He knows best what will be the sad consequence of men's dying in their sin and guilt, and since this can be prevented only by repentance in this present life, he in great compassion continues our lives to give us the happy opportunity of recovering our souls from the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity: As if the Apostle had said, it may be of great advantage to evil men to be spared a little longer; perhaps, they may think better of it, and cease to do evil: Many do that rashly, which on a review they seriously repent of; if they have a little time, it may be some good consideration or
other

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III.

other will move them; some instruction, some more experience, or some affliction will recover them: Men shall not thus complain; therefore the long-suffering God will not put them past all hope, but waits to give them opportunity of repentance.

II. I come now under the second general head to show the great folly, guilt, and misery of sinners, who repent not: And here are two things to be offered.

I. THAT this great opportunity of repentance is often lost, and by men's continuing still impenitent no advantage is made of this great favour of almighty God.

To some indeed, it is hoped, the long-suffering of God has proved their salvation, and the riches of his forbearance have led them to repentance, who, if they had died early, had died in their sins, both under the commanding and condemning power of them.

1 Cor. vi. 11. but yet by being spared, have lived to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and have been taught by the grace of God to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.

BUT alas, for the generality it is grievous to consider, how little they understand the design

design of divine patience, and the little or else evil use they make of it. How few are there who think, that the change of their lives by becoming better men is the great end they should pursue? One lays projects for his pleasure, another for his ambition, to mend his lot, as he imagines, in this world, but not to amend his ways nor his condition in relation to God and a future state. That lamentation, which our Lord Jesus with such moving accents of grief and compassion utter'd over *Jerusalem* with tears, might be often renewed, if the like compassion were to be found as easily, as the like occasion for it. *O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which make for thy peace!* Luke xix. 41, 42.

It is natural hereupon to inquire, whence this comes to pass, that men should be so unconcerned in so important an affair: To which I answer,

(1.) SOME perhaps are not duly sensible of the absolute necessity of repentance; they fancy there is no great evil in their sins, they flatter themselves with little excuses and extenuations, and deceitful arguments from the goodness of God misapprehended by them,

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for.

SERM. forgetting that a virtuous mind, and holy behaviour are not required by him merely to shew his dominion over men in precarious commands, but as the natural foundation of true happiness, which cannot be arbitrarily dispensed with; for the righteous Lord can by no means love unrighteousness, nor his favourable countenance behold the ungodly; nor is it possible, that an impure mind, sick and languishing under sin and guilt, can be other than uneasy, vile and miserable. *The wicked, says the prophet, are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa. lvii. 20.* It is to be feared, that with some the very patience of God in order to their repentance abates their sense of its being needful, *Psal. l. 21.*

(2.) OTHERS by mistaking the nature of true repentance imagine they repent, when they do not; they call a transient passion of sorrow, under a stinging conviction of guilt, and the reproaches of an awaken'd mind, repentance, whereas sorrow is only the first step towards repentance *2 Cor. vii. 10.* but is not of it self true repentance, which implies a thorough and habitual change of life and manners.

(3.) THE

is to give space for repentance.

51

SERM.

III.

(3.) THE great reason of mens not repenting is their deceiving themselves with an intention to repent hereafter, and so by putting it off from time to time never repent at all.

WE cannot suppose the generality of ungodly men are utterly ignorant of their own vices, and insensible of their guilt and danger by them, or that men, who have such sentiments, are content to venture on death and eternity in such a dangerous posture, and to try the worst of it with undaunted resolution: No, far from it, they do intend some time hereafter to repent, only at present they have some other concern more pressing, and they must not slip the opportunity, hoping that another season will not be too late for their repentance: But the mischief of it is, that there is always this pretence; some employment, some diversion or other will still be more urgent with them, and for the same reason repentance must be postponed, till after all they repent not.

AND indeed it was but a pretended design, for I judge that no man, who persists in any wickedness, does or can truly resolve to repent of it; he may intend to bewail and confess his sin, and to leave it too, when he is in other

SERM. circumstances, that suit not with it ; but true

III. repentance implies such a change, that the man would utterly wish his sin undone, and would not upon any account do it again, were he placed under the same circumstances and temptations : Now it is inconsistent to say I will at present do this evil, but I intend hereafter to wish I had not done it ; for he, who counts it best now to commit the sin, does not pretend to see reason or motive enough now not to commit it ; and how can he say he will see reason for that, where now he sees none ? He knows death and eternity will come into a near view, and that he must draw nigh to the judgment-seat, and yet at this conceived distance, these things are not enough to make him now forbear ; and if when they approach nearer, they prove more terrible than he thought, and make him repent indeed, yet at present it seems he does not think them weighty enough to induce him to repent immediately, so that he rather thinks he shall, than means that he will repent ; not so much designing it, as apprehending he shall not be able to avoid it.

2. I OBSERVE in the second place, that lost opportunities of repentance will hugely aggravate

is to give space for repentance.

53.

SERM.
III.

aggravate the guilt and misery of unrepenting sinners.

IT is an heavy article in the charge against this wicked *Jezabel*, that to her wickedness she added this, that tho' she had space and time to repent, she repented not. For

(I.) IT argues a rooted obstinacy in sin, that we are fixed and resolved in our choice, and the more there is of will in any sin, the more there is of sinfulness in it.

THE frailty of our weak natures often lays us open to temptations, which may seduce us to commit several iniquities, and then we hope that God will pity our weakness and inadvertency, and impute it to such causes; but then it must appear to be so from this, that the soul soon relents into shame and grief, and persists not in a sinful course, but as soon as it is better instructed, or comes to reflect on its sins, it renounces them with detestation and anguish. When therefore there is great space granted to the sinner, and yet he never repents, but still continues the same, and tho' he be frequently called upon, and persuaded to return, yet he holds fast his iniquities, this shews, that a love for wickedness

E 3

prevails

SERM. prevails in him, and that his heart is resolved
 III. to rebel.

HERE no excuse can be admitted from temptation or surprize; it is a rooted enmity against the law of God. In so many years never to come to a serious resolution of amendment, never to see reason to turn to God, never in all that time to be weary of his sins, and to break out into lamentation and confession, never to be effectually convinced of it, but to love and practise it still; this shews an incurable stubbornness.

(2.) IT is disingenuous ingratitude.

DESPISEST thou then the riches of his forbearance, which should lead thee to repentance? *Rom. ii. 4.* Wilt thou make light of such an eminent favour? Wilt thou continue to offend a God, who is not willing, that thou shouldst perish, nor to put thee past all hope, but waits to be gracious? What can be said in excuse for so hard an heart, which relents not under such indulgent goodness, but frustrates all the methods of divine grace and patience? No wonder it is added of such, that they are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

(3.) IN-

is to give space for repentance.

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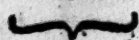
(3.) INFIDELITY is at the bottom of impenitency. SERM. III.

IT cannot be imagined that he, who firmly believes those terrible things of tribulation and anguish on them who do evil, can be so indifferent, whether or at what time he gets safe from them. No, faith would move their fear, as it did *Noah's Heb. xi. 7.* when he prepared the ark; but let the most tremendous account be given of eternal horrors, the word preached will not profit, if it be not mixed with faith in the hearers, nor will it be much considered.

IT is well if we do not wrangle about the philosophy of future torments, what is their nature, how much of metaphor is in the account given of them, what their duration, &c. till at last we doubt of the thing it self: And yet besides the strong evidence to this point in the gospel, which is founded on these important articles of an heaven and hell, it is part of the law written in mens hearts, *Rom. ii. 15.* The pompous circumstances of the judgment day, and some moving descriptions of the punishments to be inflicted are peculiar to the gospel, but not the thing itself, that there shall be a day of retributions.

SERM.

III.



LET us therefore beware of languor in our faith ; this should make such strong representations of future misery attendant on the wicked, that by dwelling on them it may warm our passions, and make us startle at the thought of going hence in an impenitent state.

THIS leads me to make an application of the foregoing discourse.

I. Let us be duly sensible of our great advantage, to whom this inestimable favour of God is yet extended.

I. IN that we are admitted to repentance, as the sure way to acceptance, after all our grievous offences.

WHEN we consider the dreadful majesty and perfect purity of the supreme being, and with what terrible vengeance he has declared his wrath from heaven against the unrighteousness of men ; when we consider also the infinite distance we are at from him the Lord of heaven and earth, and the great indignity and affront offered to his glorious excellency by every presumptuous violation of his laws ; when dust and ashes, worms that are nothing and vanity, dare for mere humour or very trifling temptations

is to give space for repentance.

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SERM.
III.

tations controul his authority and dispute his dominion, preferring a brutal lust to the dictates of his infinite wisdom, and bid defiance to his almighty anger; one would think, that upon the first reflexion he should sink down into despair, as *Nabal*, when sober, at the relation of *David's* resentment of his provoking contempt, *His heart died within him.* 1 Sam. xxv. 37.

ONE would think it natural, after the committing some great crime, to account our selves lost and undone, and like *Cain*, Gen. iv. 14. to run about with self-condemning anguish, crying, *Surely he will meet me and slay me*; I shall find no place for safety, but one day shall perish for this wickedness: But then the remembrance of his infinite goodness corrects this thought, and we find after all that we have done amiss there is forgiveness with him on the reasonable terms of submission and amendment.

HUMAN governments know no such method; the man, who is once guilty of a capital crime, has not the offer of escaping by repentance; but the great ruler and judge of all proclaims these gracious terms, *Isai. lv. 7.* *Let the wicked forsake his way, and return unto*

SERM. unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon
 III. him. What can we say less than as follows? ver. 8. *That his ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.*

LET us not think it hard, that we are called to repentance, and to part with our forbidden pleasures, and that we cannot be saved without it; for rightly consider'd it is a great favour, that they who cannot escape as innocent, may yet escape as pardoned penitents.

2. IT is a great blessing, that we are yet within time for this repentance, which it is to be feared some of us yet stand absolutely in need of, and which might easily have been lost and over.

PERHAPS you may remember the sickness or the peril, which had nearly given a conclusion to your space for repentance, when yet you had not repented; but God not willing you should perish spared you longer, and your eyes yet behold that pleasant sight, the things that belong to your peace. Oh what a price is put into your hands! Methinks there is a joyful sound and sense in those words of St. Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 2. which he utters with an air of pleasing triumph, *Behold now is the accepted*

is to give space for repentance.

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SERM.
III.

Accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. As if he should say, Now is the day, now the happy season for us, who have souls to save, let us know and rejoice in our privilege.

WHETHER we have yet been serious in our repentance and return'd to our duty or not, still it is so far our great comfort, that we have yet the opportunity of doing it. Blessed be God, we are not irrecoverably lost, we are not in their sad estate, for whom there remains nothing but the fearful expectation of judgment; who must no more hear those reviving words, *Now is the day of salvation.*

What is it makes the difference between them and you, if still unreclaimed sinners, but this, that you have still space to repent, but theirs is lost and gone; you may repent to advantage and with hope, they only in despair and in vain: If you fear the wrath to come, you may flee from it, they must endure it: Be therefore gratefully sensible what a favourable opportunity is continued to you, whether you make use of it or not.

II. LET us then beware we lose not the benefit of all this goodness by letting our time
of

SERM. of repentance slip away unimproved, which
 III. will never return more.

Y o u see by example there is great danger of it, so many have died impenitent, and with living sinners there is such a deferring and delaying the business, as bodes very ill. It is an awful thought, that we must every one shortly meet our God in judgment, and receive according to our doings; it therefore highly concerns us to consider and reflect what they have been, how we have led our lives, and behaved towards God and man in the several stages and various relations of life. If we have for the time past served divers lusts and pleasures, and minded only earthly things, if we have lived without God in the world, without hope, or faith, or great concern for the future life, while the flesh has had the ruling disposal of our hearts, our thoughts, our time, our substance and all; if we have lived in uncleanness or intemperance, in oppression or fraud, in malice or envy; if our hearts upbraid us with any evil way or the neglect of any duty, let us begin in earnest, if it is yet to begin, to walk in newness of life; let godly sorrow work repentance, and let this bring forth fruits meet for it; let your companions know

is to give space for repentance.

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III.

know they must no longer expect the same conversation, the same evil language as before; say to them, God has given me space to repent of my fornication, my vanity, and wickedness, and this I am now resolved to do.

It may be you have obtained time on your promise of this on a sick bed, or in some imminent danger, as the Psalmist *Psal. xxxix. 13. Ob spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more.* Remember you have had a fair space already, perhaps you have had these vices and sins many years ago, which should have been long since renounced and abandoned, but yet they are still with you: Alas! a little more delay and all will be spent and gone.

In order therefore to persuade you to make use of the present opportunity I would offer these few considerations to your thoughts.

I. CONSIDER this time will quickly be run out, it is not in our own hands or power; in vain do we say this or that we will do, for we know not what shall be on the morrow, *Jam. iv. 13, 14.* This day perhaps may be our last, and to-morrow may never come. Besides repentance is a work, that requires space and time to accomplish; it is not a transient

SERM.

III.

ient hasty thought, but a settled and habitual course; it is not the work of a moment to be done in an hurry; such a performance must be very imperfect, unproved, and unsafe at best: Beware then of putting it off to a dying hour, lest then you should have no better comfort than dying *Berengarius*, who, tho' he had some hope he might be saved, yet still feared he might be damned: These are sad ventures to run of a precious soul and an awful eternity.

2. CONSIDER how inexcusable will such sinners be at last; how little to object against God's righteous sentence. How just is the irrecoverable ruin of an irrecoverable sinner? What can be said where there is neither innocence nor repentance after such a space given? Thou canst not say it was by surprize, since after so many opportunities of reflexion, so many invitations thou still refusedst to return: No, it was thy settled choice, thou wast sensual, earthly, unjust, &c. and such thou resolvedst to be; forty years long was I grieved by thee, go then abandoned to repent with despair, who would not repent in hope. How bitter will such reflexions be? How wilt thou bear the reproaches of thine own mind? Re-

is to give space for repentance.

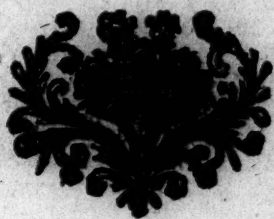
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SERM.

III.

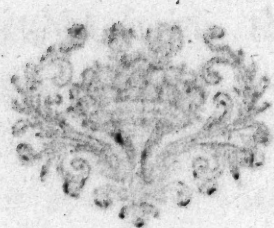
Remember in thy life-time thou hadst space and days to repent, but thou repentedst not : Then indeed thou mayest repent, but out of season, and with repentance of another kind, not virtuous nor voluntary, but forced and penal, not the amendment of repentance, but only the sorrow of it.

How light soever you may make of it now, yet when you shall stand on the confines of another world, and all the amusements of this shall vanish away as a dream, when that tremendous day shall dawn, and all shall throng in mighty concourse to the tribunal of their awful judge, expecting their sentence for life or death eternal ; then with anguish of heart and tears of blood you would, but cannot obtain what now, if you will, you may secure by turning away from your sins, and thereby save your souls alive.



SERMON

it is given space for repentance.
 number in this life time thou hadst space and
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 bunal of their awful judge, expecting their
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SERMON

S E R M O N IV.

*Practical immorality worse
than speculative infidelity*.*

I TIM. v. 8.

But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

THE crime, which the Apostle here reflects on, is so much short of that horrid contrivance, which this day brings to our minds; A design to blow up the prince, nobles, and gentry of a nation at once, an whole kingdom in epitome, is such
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* Preached at Barbican, Nov. 5. 1722. soon after the great and sudden fall of S. Sea-Stock, which had occasion'd much discontent and ill humour in the nation, to which the latter part of this discourse alludes.

SERM. an instance of cruelty, so far beyond the un-
 IV. natural neglect of the support of our private
 household, our parents, or children, that it
 seems too mild to put it but under the same
 censure. But I design something more than
 to censure this wicked practice of our ene-
 mies, and to show how odious all practices
 against natural justice, charity, and huma-
 nity are in the most orthodox believer, or
 rather who is not to any good purpose
 such, having practically denied the faith.
Tit. i. 16.

THE argument in my text warrants me
 to tell you this for a truth, *That an honest
 charitable and good-natur'd pagan is better
 than a cruel inhuman mischievous Christian,
 tho' never so sound a speculative believer;*
 for the Apostle speaks of persons esteemed
 as such.

INDEED it is well the Apostle has directly
 said it, else some fierce contenders for the
 faith would hardly endure it, and might be
 ready to call me an advocate for infidelity, for
 Deists, and Atheists; No, I am not offering
 an apology for unbelievers in *Jesus Christ* the
 Son of God, but on the contrary the very
 comparison in ranking such bad Christians be-
 low

low infidels carries sufficient evidence, that it is a great reproach to be an infidel, and his condition very unhappy, as *Ephe. ii. 12.* *2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.* show this Apostle's sense to be. And I think it the glory and excellency of Christianity, that it is so free from all partiality and connivance to its votaries and corrupt professors, and so pure and just in its measures, as always to pronounce him the *best* man, who is and doth *best*, tho' an alien and infidel, and him the *worst*, who is and doth *worst*, tho' he says he is a Christian. By this our great master tells the world his religion lies not so much in right notions and opinions, as in a pure heart, divine dispositions, and virtuous actions; a doctrine according to godliness, righteousness, and charity, without which effect the main end of truth, and its greatest glory is lost: He disclaims all bad actions, and all such as act them under his badge, and will have them degraded of the honour of Christians as none of his, but deniers of his faith.

IN speaking to this subject I shall inquire

SERM.

IV.

I. WHAT are the faults, which come within this grievous censure.

II. UPON what accounts such, as are guilty of them, are esteemed worse than infidels.

I. WHAT are the faults, which come within this grievous censure. From the single instance in the text, as from a sample, we may be directed to extend it to others of the same nature, and which come within the reason of the censure past on this.

I. ALL gross crimes against the current approved sense and light of nature, such as the sober heathens usually abstained from, or committed against the remonstrances of their own consciences: Such was the crime of neglecting to support their parents; with them, if to revere the gods was their first and great commandment, the second and like to it was to honour their parents; and such were some other crimes against the dignity of human nature, and against the rules and bonds of society, as murder, perjury, betraying and ruining their country, and the like.

THE wife former of the spirit of man within him has subjected him to very powerful restraints

straints of conscience from what grossly vilifies his nature, as a reasonable and as a sociable creature, from what is fatal to the community, whether by a criminal indulgence of his passions or lusts: Hence the Apostle says of one sort of uncleanness in the incestuous Christian at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* v. 1. that it was not known among the Gentiles, as licentious as they were; such an one was therefore to be disowned, as in that respect worse than an infidel.

2. MORE particularly it concerns all gross violations of the bonds of common justice, charity, or humanity: There was something of justice and gratitude mixed with tender affection and benevolence in the case of providing for a man's own; God the original good making man for an image of himself stampt very deep impressions of his goodness and benignity on him towards his fellows; goodness and tenderness is so much his nature, that it is currently styled humanity, and as if it was as distinguishing a character as reason; when he loses this goodness and compassion, he is styled inhumane.

ORDINARILY men feel such grateful sensations and pleasant raptures in acts of compassion

SERM. passion to a miserable brother, and naturally

IV. shrink so at the sight or hearing of what is very tragical, that it is to be hoped it is so deeply planted in human nature, as never to be lost with the generality of mankind; for tho' we read of some, *Rom. i.* who were *without natural affection*, yet it was said of the worst sort, when abandoned of God: And if common humanity be put off by any Christians instead of putting on the bowels of mercy, such instead of being the elect of God are worse than aliens and ordinary infidels. What must we think then of those, who engage in bloody massacres, slaughters and burnings?

II. I COME in the second place to inquire upon what accounts such, as are guilty of these faults, should be esteemed worse than infidels.

I. BECAUSE, as has been suggested, their actions are materially in themselves worse than the practices of infidels ordinarily are; the sober part of them do by nature the things contained in the law, says *St. Paul, Rom. ii.* They had their monsters in wickedness too as well as Christians, and I don't suppose it was here intended to compare these corrupt Christians to the worst of infidels, but to the ordinary ones and of common rank; and this

was

was reproach and shame enough to a Christian, to be worse than a common heathen, and as bad as the worst; and yet if but as bad as these, he is still worse in another respect, because

2. He acts the same crimes under the advantages and obligations of an excellent religion to do better. Christianity has called him out of darkness into marvellous light, and taught him to know his Lord's will in plain and easy characters. It proposes nobler heights of virtue, alluring him by a beautiful endear'd example and magnificent rewards, and warning him of the peril of dreadful misery, if he walk not becoming his vocation as a new creature in *Christ Jesus*, as led by the spirit into purity, righteousness, and charity.

If he be cruel or perfidious, love violence and oppression, be unpeaceable and domineering, full of strife and contention, he is so against the clearest light, against the mind of his master, who was so meek and lowly in heart, against the very spirit and soul of Christianity, and its ultimate design, which is love and kindness to all. Whatever they who are without do, if any called a brother be such, be a railer, or extortioner,
F 4 injurious

SERM. injurious in word or deed, let him be treated
 IV. as the worse 1 *Cor.* v. 11. The consequences
 of a Christian's misbehaviour in the offices of
 humanity and brotherly kindness are far more
 mischievous than in an infidel, as it thereby
 sinks the honour and reputation of Christ and
 his religion, and raises an abhorrence of them
 in the minds of inconsiderate men.

THERE is nothing Christianity is more intent about, and lays more stress upon, than to endear men to each other in mutual love and confidence, to abolish hatred, envy, and injurious cruelty. For this it exerts all its authority, all its allurements, and its most moving arguments and persuasions. This is the final issue intended by all its laws, 1 *Tim.* i. 5. the centre in which all other duties terminate, for it is the law and the prophets; of virtues it is the most eminent, 1 *Cor.* xiii. it is better than faith, *Jam.* ii. 19. it is more excellent than worship or sacrifice. A devil may believe orthodoxly *Jam.* ii. 19. or may worship, but not have charity or goodness. If then it have not this efficacy upon our minds, to sweeten us into benignity and tenderness, to put away all wrath and mischievous inclinations to harm or destroy others, it is baffled
 and

and defeated in its main end, in its chief strength and glory, and no amends can be made to repair the injury, pray and worship and believe never so much. SERM
IV.

BUT above all it is thus, when Christians abuse their religion, and make it the motive and pretext to excite and colour over their unnatural mischievous practices; this is worse than positive infidelity, but yet so it seems it oft is, *John* xvi. 3. and probably the incest blamed by St. *Paul* 1 *Cor.* v. 1. arose from the Jewish doctrine of the ceasing of all natural relations in the proselytes: However this very crime in my text was made a part of religion with some, *Mat.* xv. 5. but our Lord shews his detestation of the practice, and tho' they had devoted their gift to God, it was so far from being sacred in that sense, that it seemed rather sacrilegious to take it from their parents.

BUT none have charged more, or more vile inhumane deeds to the score of religion, than our adversaries of the *Romish* church. Such a spirit of tyranny and cruelty, such bloody and destructive principles, such horrid and inhumane practices, so aggravated, so repeated, so justified, I think and hope are
no

SERM. no where else to be found. Should we trace

IV. them through their holy wars, their holy in-
 quisition, their treacherous massacres exe-
 cuted, and others plotted and designed, their
 open persecutions in slaughters and flames, in
 exiles and prisons, gallies and dungeons:
 Should we count the millions they have
 slain and tormented without other provoca-
 tion than that of differing in some ar-
 ticles of faith, merely for propagating their
 own religion, it would make one grieve at
 heart; yet these things have been numbred a-
 mong the virtuous religious acts done for the
 honour and interest of Christ.

HAD the blessed *Jesus* commission'd his
 disciples to be generals or military officers in-
 stead of Apostles, had he given them in
 charge to slaughter and ravage all, who would
 not own their master, and persecute and tor-
 ture all, who did not profess to believe in
 him, such cruel methods had been consistent:
 But when himself declared, he came not to
 destroy mens lives but to save them, and re-
 buked that cruel spirit in his disciples; when
 he sent them out as sheep among wolves, not
 to strive or use violence, furnish'd only with
 patience and humility, with compassion to the
 souls

souls and bodies of men, to exhort and persuade, and intreat them to be wise, at the peril indeed of being undone for ever, if they refused, but no more to be done by his disciples, than to shake off the dust of their feet and leave them; that any, I say, should act so cross and contradictory, and yet have the confidence to place this to the religion which forbids it, is astonishing, and plainly proves them worse than infidels; for when did Pagans such things purely for their particular customs or idols? or what comparison in their crimes, if they had ignorantly, and in unbelief?

BUT yet I am willing to hope there are many, who are not come out of *Babylon*, that yet see her sins in this respect; but the church is not like to cease her tyranny, but wherever her authority or influence will reach, it is to be expected in attempts to overturn kingdoms by deposing kings, and absolving subjects from their allegiance, and to push their own princes upon extirpating the protestant religion by severe persecutions. We are told that King *Henry* the 4th of *France* informed K. *James* of the design of this day, and it is suspected the Jesuits rage for this became

SERM.

IV.

came fatal to him; so dangerous it is, when any are of a better mind, to oppose the torrent,

I grant they have some alleviations by resorting on protestants something of this inhumanity in their persecutions of others for conscience sake; and indeed, unless something be allowed to the times when such destructive principles were too generally in vogue, (having been so long in popish darkness, that at the first coming into the light they could not see very clearly,) I have no apology to make for what greatly needs one.

QUEEN *Elizabeth* had lost no glory, if it had not been found in the annals of her reign, that any had been burnt for mere religion and opinions, to the grief of good Mr. *Fox*, who had so great abhorrence of Queen *Mary's* cruelty in his book of martyrs, that he wished the papists had the monopoly of making martyrs, and wrote a moving latin epistle to Queen *Elizabeth* to divert the execution of a sentence for burning two in *Smithfield* for erroneous opinions; but alas he could find no place for repentance in her, not so much as to change burning for a milder death. The next reign was not free. And as for the rest I wish papists had abated as much

as others, and we would abate our accusation due to their cruel obstinacy.

BUT if any protestants retain their principles and spirit, let them share in the infamy, and be silent on this day, for the difference will not be very wide as to principle; if it be merit to slay one for no cause but not judging as we, then it will be more to slay numbers, and if singly at a stroke, why not burn or blow up many in an house in a quicker easy way?

Of what has been said we may make the following uses.

I. THEN Christianity ought not to bear the blame of these enormous crimes, tho' in professed believers: you see it condemns; nay it disowns them. Other religions caress and entertain those as allowed friends, who receive their notions, their rites, and ceremonies, tho' wicked and base in their practices. The *Jews* esteem one circumcised tho' a breaker of the moral law, *Rom. ii. 25.* and so the *Mahometans* a mussulman, and they account others as unclean and as dogs; but the holy *Jesus* owns none for his favourites merely for their faith, or baptism, or respect to him, who depart not from iniquity; no, he accounts

SERM. accounts them as deniers of his faith, he knows

IV. them not ; the matters in which nature and religion agree being greater than those, in which they are distinguished : He approves the charitable just infidel as the better man, tho' not a Christian. Religion, as well as reason, may be abused to make men worse, but that is no argument against its being excellent in its own nature.

2. LET us humbly lament it that Christianity has suffer'd so much dishonour, as to have so many believers worse than infidels in their cruelty and uncharitableness.

OUR enemies have not only hurt those whom they have oppress'd, but have brought an indelible stain on the Christian religion, have caused the name of Christ to be blasphemed among the gentiles, *Rom. ii. 24.* by their cruel and inhumane methods of propagating their religion. What *Jacob* said of *Simeon* and *Levi* upon their barbarous slaughter *Gen. xxxiv. 30.* may be said of these destroyers, they have made Christianity to stink. What an ill savour has it left among the poor *Americans* after the desolations, the tortures, and slaughters they have suffer'd in order to their conversion ? How should this

offence

offence be removed? What signifies it to tell them of heaven it self, when the poor creatures are afraid to go thither, lest they should meet any Christians there, well knowing there can be no happiness in any place, where there are such persons as they have found them to be.

T H E R E will be this good use to be made of our reflexions on papal practices; When we justly censure them, let us remember that advice of St. Paul 1 Cor. v. 2. *not to be puffed up but rather to mourn.* It is too common for men of one party or profession to take pleasure in upbraiding those of another with the remembrance of their miscarriages, (who are perhaps ashamed of them,) as if they were glad they had such faults to reproach them with: This I should not be for doing, if they would condemn themselves, and not persist in such practices, and even still let us do it with sensible grief for the deep wound thereby given to the Christian cause and name, whether by them or others.

3. L E T us be especially careful not to contribute to this dishonour of our profession by such practices. Let humanity and benignity, so becoming a reasonable creature made in the

SERM. the image of God, appear in all our conduct and
 IV. in every station, whether as parents, husbands, masters, or the like. Be not unnatural, cruel, and bitter as a terror, where you ought to be a comfort; nor abandon children to want and ignorance without any provision for their education or maintenance. As to others abroad beware of a mischievous zeal for truth itself, a zeal without charity, nay without justice, full of hatred and wrath, of clamour and reproach, hard censures, and unkind offices; that none may think you are the worse for your religion, or that it has destroyed the little remains of good nature, which the common apostacy had left; or that while it allows you not to be like beasts, it should yet permit you to be like devils in wrath and slander, in pride and tyranny to them, who will not fall down and worship just as you do.

IN vain do we condemn deists and infidels, if we are worse than they, as we certainly are, if they, void of our faith, are also clear of our hurtful passions. You may think you have run a man down, when you have anathematized or cast him out for error or heresy, and have vilified him to purpose by accounting him for an heathen; but then what a wretch

art thou, who art worse than he by thy inhumane rage and fury? In public stations he, that will not love his country above a bribe or will not serve its interests at some hazard, is worse than the Pagans, whose remarkable zeal in this particular blazes in innumerable instances throughout the *Grecian* and *Roman* histories.

4. LET us be thankful to almighty God, who has so oft deliverd this nation from such cruel enemies. Had this fatal plot succeeded, what a dismal scene had appeared? The worthy patriots of our country scattered in the air, and the pillars being destroyed the whole fabric had fallen into confusion. And yet the terrible spectacle of that day would not have been so bad, as the lasting consequences in returning into bondage in *Egypt* spiritually so called. Blessed be the watchful keeper of our *Israel*, who brought to light the hidden works of darkness.

BESIDES what our fathers have told us, and the law established in our *Israel* for a testimony *Psal.* lxxviii. 5. some of our own eyes have beheld this day with joy for another deliverance. When we saw a popish prince on the throne, encouraged by a neighbouring

SERM. monarch, who had spread his terrors to pro-

IV. testants abroad, and broke through laws and edicts to the destruction of his protestant subjects at home, who had been his support ;

When we saw terrors round about, bonds and shackles preparing for us, laws swallowed up by a dispensing power, the army model'd and *Irish* chosen regiments added thereto, our universities, cities, and corporations subverted, and then new moulded for special services ; behold in the midst of the most general sadness and dark presages a small cloud of an hand's breadth arises, which soon overspread our hemisphere ; A protestant small prince with a few forces attempted our succour, while the mighty monarch of *France* stood looking on, and met with such an unanimous welcome, that the whole kingdom was gained almost without a blow : Then were we in a dream, and our mouths were filled with laughter, we sang the praises of our God, but we soon forgot his works, neither were we thankful nor wise to make a right use of the price put into our hands. But yet let not the marvellous goodness of the Lord be forgot, who hath so oft shewed strength with his arm, and scatter'd the proud in the imaginations

ginations of their thoughts. Many a time may *England* say, if it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, then they had swallowed us up quick, *Psal.* cxxiv. 12. Blessed be the rock of our salvation, that he hath not given us up to the wills of our exasperated enemies, altho' our land be filled with sin against him.

5. LET us pray and watch, that we may still be delivered from such unreasonable men, *2 Theff.* iii. 2. not by any imitation of their cruelties, or bearing hard on any, tho' papists, who are peaceable in the land: Tho' those seem to have the slenderest title to mercy, who show no mercy, yet our rule is not *to do to them, as they would do to us,* but *as we would they should do to us.* But let not us further their evil devices against the protestant interest, nor add iniquity to iniquity, lest we provoke our rock to sell us, as unworthy of his protecting care any longer.

IT is not unlikely, that during our present discontents and disturbances they are meditating to set upon us when sore and wounded, as *Simeon* and *Levi* did: For the iniquity of our covetousness God has been wroth with us, and by falling into that grievous

G 2 snare

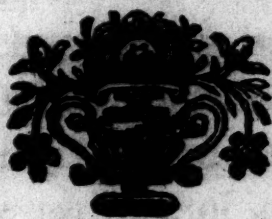
SERM. snare we are pierced through with many sor-

IV. rows. Discontents are high and resentments

deep, and there is great danger, lest strong passions push us on to wrong methods; but methinks no true protestant can ever judge, that a popish government will mend us by bringing us into the condition of our brethren in *France*: Sure it cannot be worth the violating our oaths and allegiance to purchase such a prize; Our religion and liberties are not such small things, that because we have lost some wealth, we must needs in a pet throw these after it. But surely looseness in principles and practice, neglect of religion and common morality, the bands of all society, justice, truth, faithfulness to the trust reposed in us, and love to the community, our insatiable avarice and self-seeking (the rise of all injustice, extortion, and treachery,) lay us open to the arts of our enemies and the wrath of God: From this therefore keep yourselves pure.

LET us pray to God to direct our king, that he may rule us in the integrity of his heart, that our nobles and senators may be repairers of our breaches, and may know and pursue the things that make for our peace,
that

that the extremity of our danger may add seriousness to their counsels, and public spiritedness to their designs, that at last we may behold many earnest lovers of their country, preferring *Jerusalem* to their chiefest joy, true to the king and to the public, as they would wish others to be to themselves, that avarice and ambition, corruption and bribery may not be as a moth and rottenness to consume us, nor the god of this world, unrighteous mammon, may not blind their eyes, lest we be quite lost, if in this crisis we see not our true interest: Not, that we have not a God mighty to save, but because we are no longer worthy to be the objects of that signal care, of which this day we have expressed, and I hope will long retain a grateful remembrance.



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 ful remembrance.



SERMON V.

*True Happiness not to be found
in any earthly enjoyment.*

ECCLESIAST. ii. 20.

*Therefore I went about to cause my heart to
despair of all my labour, which I took un-
der the sun.*

IF we were but so sagacious beforehand,
as to perceive what experience will cer-
tainly teach us afterwards, as to the vanity
in expecting much satisfaction from every
worldly condition; or had we the wisdom to
improve the experience of others before us,
and to hearken to their counsel, who, being
deluded with the like inclinations and con-
ceits as our selves, have made the dangerous

SERM. but fruitless experiment, it would tend much
 V. to our happiness, and we should act a very
 wise part by beginning where they ended, and
 where we ourselves shall end at last, if we will
 venture to make the same trial; we might
 prevent a great deal of folly and misery; we
 might be quiet and contented in this life
 without aspiring to happiness here, and more
 effectually pursue and provide for such real
 happiness in the life to come; Whereas by
 cherishing great expectations and desires of
 making ourselves happy in this world, far be-
 yond what an humble contentment with food
 and raiment convenient can make us, we are in
 huge danger of never being happy at all, dis-
 appointed of what we sought here but could
 not find, and excluded from the other, which
 we might have found, because we did not
 seek it in the first place; and so by labouring
 for the meat that perisheth, lose that which
 endureth to eternal life.

My design therefore now is to persuade you
 to take up *Solomon's* resolution, never to che-
 rish any great opinion of the best contrived
 condition or circumstances in this world; not
 to delude your selves by great expectations of
 the most promising scenes, which may lie in

your

your view; never to imagine, that if you could compass such a design, could settle in such a condition, or make such an alteration, then you should have your hearts desire and might call your selves blessed. It is our wisdom to give up all such hopes, and to quit all such attempts as vain, and to sit down under this conviction, that after all our wishes, our projects, our care and toil, nay after all our successes too, which may attend them, we shall not be much nearer to true satisfaction, than we were before; we must still be content to bear many wants, many inconveniences, nay many burdens; and that contentedness may serve us as well, and perhaps be more practicable in our former inferior, if not extreme condition.

To this end let us seriously consider these instructive words of *Solomon*, and the reasons by which he was led to this change of his disposition implied in the word *therefore*, that is, because of the things he had before related, namely his many labours and arts used to attain a condition, which he could never be master of in all the various turns of life. This leads us to look back into the precedent part of this book.

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IN the beginning the preacher sets himself to give an account of his case, but with an heart so full, and so burden'd with the sense of his folly and disappointments, that he could hold no longer, but in his very first words gives vent to his wearied mind by bursting forth into a passionate exclamation, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Like a man who had been travelling abroad on some great discoveries, at his return his friends flock about him to hear his report, and he cries out at his first approach *No success!* I am come back as I went, only wearied and disappointed.

HE goes on to tell us chap. i. ver. 12. how he was qualified, if any man ever was, to find out what would give a man solid satisfaction on this earth. He was a king of great estate and power, great wisdom and capacity, great experience added to it, and great application in the inquiry, pursuing after happiness in every turn and corner, where he might hope to meet with it, shifting the scene from one stage to another, and running through the whole circle of earthly delights, where there was any promising appearance. He also acquaints us with some of the particular
 essays

effays and trials he had made. He had tried knowledge, mirth, pleasure, and all manner of diversions and accommodations, whatever wealth and power could furnish, or wit could contrive, or fancy prompt to; and yet all was clogged with such deficiencies, such crosses, and sore travail, that he laments all his labour, and tells us in the text, that he came to this conclusion to desist, in utter despair of ever finding solid satisfaction in any circumstances of this life.

HENCE we may learn this useful instruction, *That a wise and considerate man will easily see reason to give up all hopes of finding solid and full satisfaction in any portion or lot, which this present world can afford.*

THIS must be our conclusion at last, unless we be always foolish and miserable, and the sooner we come to it, the happier shall we be. I know men are tempted, as *Solomon* was, with flattering hopes, that in this and the other situation they should be completely happy, and probably had rather follow his example, than trust his experience or report; but as they will certainly find it true in the event, so may they come to the knowledge of it sooner by considering the nature
of

SERM. of all these present goods, which are imagined to be the proper ingredients of this happiness.

V.

If we will not be moved with *Solomon's* authority and example, let us attend to the grounds and reasons of it, and take into our view some of those considerations, which diminish'd his esteem and hope, and cool'd his desires; that they may have the like effect on us.

I. THE first consideration, we are to take into our view, is the great labour and fatigue, which attends the pursuit of this imaginary prize.

THIS is what *Solomon* often regrets chap. i. ver. 8. *All things are full of labour*, labour and travail run through every scene. Let our scheme be what it will, by which we propose to raise our selves unto happiness, it will surely cost us this to attempt it, whether we succeed or not. If wealth or grandeur be our aim, what pains does it cost us to attain it? running from sea to sea, sitting up late and rising early, in weariness and toil, in perils and care. If fame or glory be sought, with what hazard are those atchievements performed,

performed, which must gain it? If preferment and advanced stations, as thinking we shall then sit easy, when we can overlook our neighbours, what difficulties, strife, envy, and opposition must we expect to meet with in the scramble of so many competitors, where many run, but one only obtains? If with a more noble ambition we aspire after knowledge, and think to be happy in retreating from the world, from seeking riches or honour as too mean a prize, and which, if *Solomon* had not done it, one would hardly have mentioned on this occasion; if we think, I say, to gain our end of happiness by retiring to speculation and natural philosophy and the improvements of arts and sciences, yet here we find much study is a weariness of the flesh, and with pain it is we creep first from letters to syllables, then to words, and thence to things. So that whatever we account to be the goodly prize, which would make us happy, you see we must run hard, if we will obtain it. This is one discouragement to take off the edge of our desires and expectations to be happy here, but this is the least. We are content to take pains, provided it be for a good reward, and to climb up the hill with labour,

SERM. labour, if we may but gain the pleasant prospect we expect and desire; but here also we shall be disappointed, for

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II. WE are to consider the vanity and emptiness of all these desirable things, when in great measure we have attained them. They prove so little, and so deficient in goodness, that they do not satisfy nor please, and we have scarce mended our condition by them.

Solomon had all the materials in his possession, but complains, *all is vanity, yea vanity of vanities*, again and again, that is, they were exceeding vain, destitute of all solid excellency to answer man's great desires, or give any great addition of satisfaction. We open our mouths wide, but all we take in does not fill them chap. v. ver. 10. chap. vi. ver. 7. the man cannot tell what he wants, yet feels he wants very much. Many things in the expectation appear very inviting, and we are apt to think, that if we could gain such a point, could accomplish such a design, or rise to such a degree, we should surely be well, and would wish for nothing more; but if providence indulge us with success,
and

and give us our own desire, as *Psal.* lxxviii. 29. we find the enjoyment does in no wise answer the expectation. We have more capacities to take in than the best objects here have of good to supply them with, more affection to employ than they can entertain, the bed is too short, we have not room enough to extend our selves, or the objects have not charms enough to draw our delight to a degree which may satisfy; we find the grasp of our minds is not fill'd any more than our arms with embracing a cloud; at a distance they look big, but when we come up with them, they almost vanish, so that we are neither satisfied with them, nor without them. When we want them we are in pain, when we possess them, in disappointment: While we find difficulties in the way, and we fear we cannot gain them, we have a mighty value and desire for them; when the difficulty is over, and we see them in our power, our value is gone, and we grow cold and indifferent, as if nothing made them desirable, but the difficulty which gives us the trouble, and with that the pleasure is gone too: Thus are we foolishly disquieted in vain, and weary our selves for very vanity *Isai.* xlix. 4. Let

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 a man enjoy all this world's goods, yet if he enjoy not something beyond them, it is not enough: Or suppose a man does find some delightful relish of his portion, yet it is so faint, so scanty a satisfaction, that a very little want or cross destroys it all. Is it then possible to be happy in such a narrow sphere, in such defective little things? No, all is vanity.

III. ALL these earthly comforts, besides their being defective in goodness, are mixt and burden'd with many attending evils: In the one respect they are *vanity*, in the other *vexation of spirit*. They are grapes that grow on thorns, and, as we say, the greatest conveniences have their very great inconveniences, *Solomon* observes it.

SUPPOSE a man thinks to be happy in knowledge and universal learning, in extending his views beyond the little sphere of the vulgar, and making great progress in arts and sciences, yet it has sorrow attending it as well as pleasure chap. i. ver. 18. He is dunced and posed with so many difficulties, so overwhelmed with objections and knots, which he cannot untie, that it frets and tires his mind; besides which his greater knowledge

oft exposes him to the odium of the slothful and ignorant, who can enjoy their ignorance at a cheaper rate. If he thinks to be happy in jolly mirth and sensual pleasures, in airy diversions and gay fancies, that mirth in the end will prove but madness, chap. ii. ver. 2. in that laughter the heart is sorrowful; it dissipates the mind, and leaves an uneasy damp behind it, chap. vii. ver. 3. If it be in riches and treasures plentifully amassed, alas! this pierces him with sorrows and cares, makes him a mark for envy, and charges his mind with an heavy weight, chap. v. ver. 12. See how the unhappy man is troubled with the unwieldiness of his huge possessions. His large accounts, his projects to improve his superfluous wealth, and his jealousy of losing it, render him as a beast of burden for others use.

If there be any pleasure in this world, it is in a friend, who is as our own soul, where minds mingle and clasp in fervent endearments; and yet how oft does our friend's folly or misery pierce us with grievous sympathy, and put us to pain for him? The tender mother, more than once, travails in pangs for her beloved offspring. Nay, as valuable as life it-

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self

SERM. self is, yet if a man has much of it, it runs

V. dregs at last, it is labour and sorrow, tiresome and burdensome, *Job* vii. 16. There is no separating the rose from its prickles, no comfort unmix'd, but the evil continually allays the good. And do we think to be happy at this rate between the defectiveness of comforts, and the evils annexed? It can never be: What cures one evil creates another.

IV. A concurrence of many things is requisite to complete an earthly happiness, and without them all our satisfaction fails. Our real wants are many, and our desires various, and there is no one thing can satisfy them all, but they require almost as many distinct remedies.

KNOWLEDGE will not feed us, nor relieve the burdens of poverty; *Solomon* found a poor wise man, chap. ix. 15. Reputation and fame and friends will not give health: Nor can money, which in common trade is said to answer all things, purchase either wisdom, or ease from pain, or clear up a dejected spirit. There needs as great variety of accommodations to fit our several wants, as there does of garments to fit our several members, there is no one compendious universal remedy, which

can alone answer all things; it is only the blessed God himself, who can do this, *Rev.* SERM.
V.
xxi. 7.

AND tho' it may seem easy to dispense with some one or two small wants, if the great ones be all answered, yet such is the nature of a man pampered with prosperity, and eagerly affecting sensitive happiness, that one bitter want remaining spoils the enjoyment of all he possesses, and we usually regret more the little pleasure we want, than we enjoy all the rest. Let *Abraham* be never so great, and have greater promises, yet *What will you give me, if I go childless?* *Gen. xv. 2.* and so speaks *Rachel*, *Gen. xxx. 1.* Let *Abab* have all the kingdom, yet if he want a little convenient spot, and cannot have *Naboth's* vineyard, he lies sullen on his bed, and cannot eat *1 Kings* *xxi. 4.* See a remarkable instance in *Haman*, *Esth. v. 11.* who tho' advanced above all the princes, yet cries *This avails me nothing.* What's the matter? why one particular poor man does not pay him respect enough, and so he has no enjoyment in all the rest: How is it possible such a trifle should put a man out of humour, who had got such late eminent favours? We may think it strange; but the

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truth is, tho' another could have slighted it, yet prosperity is a nice and peevish thing; it makes a man wanton, proud, and delicate, and the mind becomes so pettish, dainty, and humourfome, that the least cross raises an impatient flame, and it can bear nothing; the man is as miserable in the want of one insignificant thing, as if he wanted all the rest. How then should a man ever be happy in carnal delights, which are always sure to want some or other of the many things requisite to give him full satisfaction, and he is never like to have all his wishes, when he wishes so extravagantly?

THERE are some evils so unavoidable, that no earthly portion can cure or remove them. What are riches and pomp, friends and diversions to a man burden'd with natural infirmities and diseases? Gold and silver are not eyes to the blind, nor feet to the lame, they cannot restore strength to the feeble, nor youth to the aged, nor can they give ease under acute pains; nay, such an habitual infirmity takes away all the pleasure of wealth, honour, learning, or power, when all *these* can no way remove the anguish of *that*. There are many inward disquietudes and wounds,

wounds, for which there is no balm, no healing in any external comforts, such as proceed from an unkind relation, a rebellious or unfortunate child, an unhappy scene of contention.

BESIDES the compassionate miseries of others there are many times, in which riches profit not, and in which should a man gain the whole world, and still remain under the pressure of such disquieting evils, they would avail him nothing; and yet some or other of these evils are not long to be avoided or escaped without almost a miracle. What then shall make a man happy, when he has no relish of all his store, no profit of all his labour under the sun? So precarious a portion, exposed to so many hazards and interruptions, can never afford perfect quiet and rest.

VI. THE duration of all the delights in this world are so short and perishing, that no thorough satisfaction can ever be obtained in any earthly portion.

IMAGINE them to be much greater than they are, and to have all that is possible to be had, yet we cannot forget, that all the glory of man is as the flower of the field; it is now sweet and gay, but to morrow wither'd

SERM. and neglected. By the time a man has with

V.



much labour and pains settled himself to his liking, he begins to be alarm'd with apprehensions of parting from all his sublunary comforts: The fine superstructure is but just rais'd, and in a few years down it falls. He has formed, as he imagines, a brave scheme of happiness, and prepared all materials for putting it in execution, and then his breath goes forth, and all his thoughts perish: He says within himself, *Now sure I shall be happy for many years, I will now sit down and be merry;* but in the midst of all these pleasant flatteries come the melancholy tidings, *This night thou must depart, and then whose shall all this be?* Luke xii. 20. Death sweeps the stakes, and contracts the large inventory into the few articles of a winding-sheet and a coffin: Then farewell all dear relations, then all this imperfect knowledge, all the skill in arts and sciences is at an end, he carries nothing away with him, his glory descends not after him, naked he came into this world, and naked he goes out of it; nay before that, perhaps thieves break through and steal his treasures, or a public enemy invades them, *Lament.*

i. 10.

Is he happy in agreeable society and dear relations? Does he live joyfully with the wife of his youth and the children of his bowels? Lo! of a sudden comes death, and makes an heart-rending separation, and tears the beloved object from his embraces with cruel violence; the desire of his eyes is gone with a stroke, and his disappointed grieved love pains him equal to, or beyond his former pleasure; and thus is all his worldly happiness ruined at once. Where now is the blessedness he once spake of? Where is the mountain, which was thought to have stood so strong, that it could not be moved? How could this man be happy, who had no surer portion than this, who could not but fear and see this coming with frequent melancholy thoughts, who knew he built all his happiness upon the sand, and that great must be the fall thereof, whenever the winds should blow and the rains fall?

NAY, if his earthly portion should stand firm, and continue long, the man himself will at last loath and nauseate it, it will be no longer valuable to him, for *desire it self shall fail*, and then he complains as old Barzillai, 2 Sam. xix. 35. *Can I discern between good*

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and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat and drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men or singing women? for so it is, that all that is in the world passeth away, and so does all the lust and relish of it, 1 John ii. 17.

Now if *every one* does not see reason to despair of being happy here in an earthly portion, yet sure a *considerate* man cannot miss it! *Solomon's* conclusion is so very obvious, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Let any man say from experience, if he can, that he finds any portion here, which is not vanity, any condition, which in a little while does not prove vexation of spirit: Let him say, whether his mind be not in continual disquietude, while he is deeply engaged in worldly intrigues, and intent upon the pursuit of some imaginary happiness. What strange and uneasy passions do these matters excite in us, which are utterly inconsistent with true happiness?

FROM what has been said,

I. LET us learn this point of wisdom, as soon as may be, namely, *never to expect nor aim at any great satisfaction in this world.*

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IT is long before experience it self can convince men of it, altho' so plain a case. The experience of others seldom moves them, who come after *Psalm* xlix. 13. and not a little of their own will do it, until it has been oft repeated. They are baffled in one design and scheme, which they thought would do, but then they attempt to do it by another, as *Solomon* did, or repeat the same again, fancying that it only wanted better management at first: And thus we tire ourselves in fruitless labours and desires, and have a great deal of folly to lament, which by this wisdom had better been prevented: It is certainly what we shall come to at last, and if we would cause our hearts to despair, use a little consideration, would but improve common observations, and commune with our hearts about these plain matters, till we are fully convinced of it, it might serve us instead of costly experience.

2. LET us be content with our present condition, and never fancy we can make it very much better, if it be but moderately well. We can be truly happy in no condition in this life, let us contrive and shift never so much, but content and easy we may be with reasonable

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able accommodations; some wants and burdens we must take up with, let our circumstances be what they will, so that there is no such mighty difference, as we imagine, in the several conditions of life.

HE who is content and easy in his lot, and feels no pinching want, is near upon a level with the greatest in point of comfort, for they are but content, and he is the same, and if more content, then more happy, tho' not so great or rich. For after all, he is the nearest to happiness, who has the fewest wants, not who has the largest possessions; and tho' we should gain a great deal more, it is a question whether we should want the less; and then since the use of worldly goods is only to supply our wants, what are we the nearer? for I doubt few are so eager in their pursuit of riches or power for the sake of others, as for themselves. It is much the better from a due sense of the vanity of all things below and the excellency of those above to lessen our necessities by regulating and contracting our desires within the bounds of our supplies, than to enlarge our desires and increase our supplies; for as large desires are apt to grow unruly and

and licentious, and not to be gratified, so our content is more effectually secured upon the grounds of self-denial by having our desires under discipline, than upon the largeness of our fortune, or the advantage of our circumstances, because these are slippery and uncertain, and then we lose our contentment with them; whereas the principles of our mind are more firm, and more in our own power, the one is well fortified and secure, the other exposed to a thousand casualties; but for certain it can never be worth while to purchase any lot or condition at the expence of a good conscience, and the hope of future happiness, which is a much greater treasure than all the delights this world can afford: Our prosperity, which at last will be vanity, will then be vexation of spirit; and when vicissitude or mortality have removed this, what shall we then do with an uneasy and wounded spirit?

3. WHAT remains, but that we bear a more constant regard to the unseen state, where alone this true happiness is to be found, for we are not left without a provision suitable to our natures, and adequate to our most enlarged desires.

THE

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V.



THE blessed God, who made us of his own good pleasure, made us to be happy, and is as desirous of our being so, as we are ourselves; not indeed in the same way and time, not on this earth subject to vanity, accursed and overspread with thorns and briars, not according to our hasty impatient desires in this life, where we neither deserve it, nor are meet for it; but when we shall have approved our fidelity to him by a life of faith, patience, and obedient holiness in this state of trial, we shall then find our heart's desire accomplished. For this purpose he has prepared a kingdom, a paradise, an inheritance, to which he invites and calls us; when we shall have fought the good fight, and finished our course, there is laid up a crown in readiness for us.

If here be only vanity, there is fulness of joy, which will satisfy all our desires, supply all our wants, and ease us of all our burdens; no allays or mixture of evil, no vicissitudes nor mortality, but riches, honour, glory, pleasure, and friends without end. Hither then let us turn our eyes, if we are in earnest to be happy, and turn away from these vanities. Let us set our affections on the things above, let us oft get up to the mount, and view that
good

good land during the fatigues and miseries of this dark wilderness; let us press forward towards the mighty prize of our high calling with the holy ardor of those, who through faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises; and then the well-grounded hope of this will sustain us under all the pressures and burdens of this vain life: It was the faith in this, which made *Moses* rich without the treasures of *Egypt*, great enough without being son to *Pharaoh's* daughter, and happy without the pleasures of sin. But in vain do we seek for satisfaction, if we prefer this world and flesh before those precious promises, if through the impatience of a carnal mind we will waste our time and thoughts in pursuit of present good. If here we place our chiefest comfort, we must hereafter be tormented, and indeed be neither happy here, nor in the world to come.

BUT I would observe further, that tho' complete happiness is not to be met with in this life, yet such degrees of it, as are here attainable, are likeliest to be secured by true religion, which will enable a good man to be more happy in the possession and use of a little,

SERM. the, than the wicked are in their great abundance;
 V. dance; for

1. BY abating his desires of earthly things he is chearfully content with a little. We all know, that a man's happiness lies not in the things without him, but in his mind, and that those are sought after in order to satisfy and content this; he therefore has the better lot, who has in the greatest degree attained this end; not he who has the most, but whose remaining necessities and desires are the fewest. Now religion is the best instructor in this useful lesson, and the most powerful principle of mortification: By this the righteous man beholds the vanity and insignificancy of worldly things in the truest light; the strong impression made on his mind by the things, which are eternal, makes the things of sense and time seem very little in that comparison. There are none of these can do him any great service beyond relieving the necessities of nature, and with this he is well content; he is crucified to the world, and the world to him; he looks on all the perishing interests of this life with the mortified eyes of a pilgrim and a stranger; he is not disturbed at the small figure he makes in the world, or that he comes not in
 for

for a larger share of it; he is easy under the divine disposal, and remembers it is but a little while he has to stay, and that when he goes, he can take nothing away with him; with food and raiment he can be content, and thus godliness gives contentment *1 Tim. vi. 6.* Whereas this may be more than the ungodly can say, who prosper in the world, and yet are continually tormented with uneasy restless desires of obtaining more: Insatiable as the grave they cry *Give, give*, are tired with fresh pursuits, and vexed with new disappointments; and while they are the envy and admiration of all about them, are yet fretting for want of something, which they have not, without which, like *Haman Esth. v.* all they have avails them nothing.

2. HE enjoys his little with the comfort of a good conscience, and this always makes a feast, tho' he dine on a morsel of herbs; and gives good company, tho' alone. His portion is not from plunder and spoil, it is not the fruit of violence and oppression, not the houses of the widow, which he has devoured, nor the wages of the hireling, which he has withheld: Such are not the righteous, but the wicked, who oft rise to their great estates by injurious

SERM. injurious treacherous methods, by cruel extortion, deceitful bribes, or dishonesty in their trusts, by which they make haste to be rich, but are not innocent. These things give an ill relish to all, and disturb their minds, so as the charms of their pomp and mirth cannot lay the evil spirit. How much more easy he, who with innocency enjoys himself in his small portion, the fruit of a blessing on his honest labour and industry.

3. HE enjoys his little with more advantage by his sober and regular use of it, by which means, namely temperance and sobriety, modesty and frugality, it goes farther and relishes sweeter than the larger incomes of such, as are prodigal and vain, luxurious and wanton, by which methods, like the prodigal son, they out-run their estates, as well as their health, in riotous living: By vanity and ambitious projects, by emulation and ostentation they oft bring themselves into straits and disgrace, or by indulging themselves excessively they come to relish nothing, and obtain little else but a short and unhealthy life.

BUT the righteous man is far better, whom the grace of God hath taught to live soberly,
and

in any earthly enjoyment.

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and walk humbly, not to make his belly his God, nor to make provision for the flesh, but to keep a due discipline, by which he who has least, has no want, and he who has much, has nothing to spare. So that instead of his envying the great pomp and rich dainties of his superiors, they rather may envy the health, sound sleep, and good stomach of their inferior, who is content with the cheap and easy provisions of nature beyond the costly banquets of the rictous, with whom to run to the same excess is neither fit nor desirable.



I

SERMON

in any earthly enjoyment.
and walk humbly, not to make his
God, not to make provision for the flesh, VI
but to keep a true discipline by which
who has less, has no want, and he who has
more, has nothing to spare. So that instead
of his carrying the great pomp and rich equip-
ment of his superior, they will in many cities
the healthy, sound sleep, and good humour of
their inferior, who is content with the camp
and early provisions of nature, beyond the self-
indulgence of the rich, with whom no man
in the same reaches a health, it is not desirable.



SERMON

SERMON VI.

*Holy men from all quarters
of the world shall meet in
heaven *.*

LUKE xiii. 29.

*They shall come from the East and from the
West, from the North and from the South,
and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*

SINCE by the providence of God we
are likely now to separate and scatter,
I chuse to call your thoughts to the
contemplation of that great gathering, when
I 2 all

* Preached at the Marshalsea prison in *Dublin* July 22,
1705, upon the author's release from thence, where he had
been confined above two years for a principle of judg-
ment: The debtors at the same time being discharged by
an act of grace.

116 *Holy men from all quarters of*

SERM. all the servants of God shall delightfully con-

VI. *vene, not for a transient interview but an eternal cohabitation. We may go some East and some West, but from all quarters God will gather together the prepared heirs of his kingdom: From hence I gather this observation,*

THAT the holy servants of God, however dispersed and scattered into different quarters on earth, shall all meet again and sit down in God's kingdom in heaven.

I propose to speak to these two general heads.

I. THE subject here spoken of, *They shall come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South.*

II. WHAT is here said of these dispersed holy persons in relation to their future society, *They shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*

I. As to the first general, the subject spoken of, here are two things to be considered,

1. WHO are the persons intended by this indefinite *They*. It cannot be intended of all universally. Alas, how many are there in the world, who will never meet again with their

their holy excellent acquaintance, nor meet comfortably with any in the future state! True indeed all shall one day assemble at the awful bar of the universal judge, righteous and wicked, all generations shall appear on that mighty theatre, the oppressor and the oppressed, the faithful ambassadors of Christ, and they who would not be persuaded by them; but as this meeting will afford no pleasure to the guilty criminals, who will grieve to see the witnesses of their crimes or the accusers of their follies, so neither will it be of any continuance, for presently a separation shall be made between the sheep and the goats, who shall not fold together. The rich man and *Lazarus* may have an interview, but an unpassable gulph shall for ever divide them: And tho' the wicked shall croud together from East and West in the same woful Tophet, yet will they find no joy in that lamentable society, but on the contrary will be a terror to each other by their mutual revenge and bitter reproaches. But this meeting in the text is for mutual delight and agreeable society, for we find ver. 28. that many intruders shall be thrust out.

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THE persons therefore here spoken of are all truly religious and holy Christians, who have faithfully served God, and received the Lord Jesus; you may see in the precedent verse, that this is no ordinary attainment, and what many pretenders cannot make out. This is more than crying *Lord, Lord*, giving Christ his titles and standing up for his honour, or offering a few formal prayers. This is more than to wish and cry for salvation at a dying hour; it is more than to eat in his presence, or to have visible communion with Christ and his church; these are the qualifications of the rejected. It is true many flatter themselves confidently on these grounds, but to no purpose so long as they work iniquity, and paint the outside only, whilst they are slaves to the imperious sway of fleshly lusts, or drudges to the world in covetousness and ambition: No treacherous pretenders to faith without holiness, nor loud boasters of devotion to God without justice and love to man shall enter in there. They are only the humble serious mortified Christians, in whose heart the love and fear of God rules against all other motives, whose religion makes them better than their neighbours in their several relations and various dealings, who seriously and earnestly strive

strive to enter the strait gate with fear and with trembling, as having to do with God both in secret and upon the open stage, and not only hear and eat in his presence, but live and act accordingly, and work righteousness at all times; such as were *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

2. THESE are in the mean time supposed to be dispersed over the world in all quarters: Some originally *by birth*; that happy congregation will contain some of all countries, every nation will send some members to this great convention, *Rev. v. 9. Out of every kindred, tongue, and people.* We need not be curious to inquire how this can be, or whether the gospel has really been preached in every part, or whether any of those Pagans, who know not the gospel, can be saved; we must leave that to the righteous judge of all, who will not judge them by our gospel law, since they have it not, but by that law which they have, the law written in their hearts. It is enough that we are told every country will afford some faithful servants of God to sit down in his kingdom; much more every quarter of the world, *East, West, North and South* says the text; and this of their own original production.

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OTHERS are by accident driven into all parts. Sometimes on worldly business, men go from city to city for traffick and merchandize, and know not whether they shall ever return more to see their dear friends again.

Impiger extremos currit mercator ad Indos.

Like birds of the same nest, so are families; when grown up, they disperse themselves different ways, each to provide for himself. Or sometimes by persecution; thus we read of the primitive Christians *Acts viii. 1.* when there was a great persecution of the church at *Jerusalem*, they were all scattered abroad; and others, of whom the world was not worthy, wander'd about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, *Heb. xi. 38.* glad to flee from savage men to the more merciful beasts, and leave their acquaintance to go into a strange land for quiet and safety: Thus they, who were once associated here, are casually scattered, and die in distant countries, but tho' separated in the places of their abode, are yet united in love and hope.

I proceed now in the second place to consider,

II.

the world shall meet in heaven.

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II. WHAT is here said of these dispersed holy persons in relation to their future society. SERM. VI.

I. THEY shall come together again to the same place and kingdom. Heaven is the place of the general rendezvous, whither the saints all steer, when separated by any storm, as to the appointed common port. It is a needless curiosity to inquire how they get thither, God will take care to accomplish it, perhaps by a convoy of angels, who know the road; thus *Lazarus* is represented to have been conveyed into *Abraham's* bosom *Luke* xvi. 22. and thus we read *Mat.* xxiv. 31, that angels shall at the last day gather together the elect from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other: But whatever way it be, God has promised them that good land and given them a right to it, and therefore will certainly bring them to it to inherit it. All of them shall come; they, who for distance of time or place could not be together in this world, shall meet there; they, who by reason of death or crosses could not long continue together here, shall meet then for ever: Prophets shall then meet with Apostles, and Jews with Gentiles; sheep of divers folds shall lie down together in the eternal green pastures

of

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VI.

of that heavenly paradise, and either recover their lost acquaintance, or contract one wholly new.

2. **THEY** shall at their next meeting sit down. This implies

(1.) **THEIR** final rest in allusion to a traveller at his journey's end; where he designs to stay. Till we reach heaven we are wandering pilgrims, and must expect no long resting-place while on our way. We go from stage to stage, toss about from place to place, and from one condition to another. If we are never so prosperous in this world, yet we have higher ends to pursue, and must not long stay to enjoy here. He, that sets up his staff saying he shall never be moved, speaks vainly, and if he sit down never so securely, he will presently hear the voice, *Arise, go hence.*

Now in heaven they sit down, here is their journey's end, they lay by staff and scrip and all the troublesome furniture of this wearisome uncertain state; there they dwell and tarry as at their eternal home; they have found their father's house, their relations and inheritance, and now they sit down to converse

verse together for ever without change or separation.

(2.) THEY may be said to sit as being at the end of their labour, in a posture of ease and cessation. Here they toil and work, they run and fight, they fear and watch, and can take no long rest; fresh troubles and trials are continually coming upon them, they cannot sit securely, their task and safety will not permit it; providence itself will disturb them and find them busy employment; we must work out the day, for we have a great deal to do for God, for ourselves, and for others. But in heaven they meet to rest, who before were fellow-labourers and sufferers; *they rest from their labours* Rev. xiv. 13. not from active service, but from painful toil and uneasy difficulties; they have done their work and laid down their burden: Now they may take their rest, none will disturb them more, they sit down quietly, they feel no more pain nor sorrow, for all tears are wiped away from their eyes.

(3.) THEY sit down as at a feast. The text alludes to a wedding-supper v. 25. Here they may be forced to take up with mean and scanty fare, and eat their solitary morsel,
the

SERM. the bread of affliction and waters of adversity,
 VI. and mingle their tears with their food; or
 like *Israel* in *Egypt* with their staff in their
 hand, scarce able to eat it at leisure: But
there they meet in brotherhood at a plentiful
 feast, all of them their heavenly father's
 guests; some indeed sit in higher, some in
 lower places, but all have room and entertain-
 ment; *there* they fare deliciously upon fulness
 of joy and rivers of pleasure, and feast and re-
 joice in sweet harmonious society.

(4.) THEY sit down in a kingdom, as
 kings seated on their thrones. Thus Christ is
 sat down at the right hand of God in his
 throne, and has promised, that his faithful
 servants shall in like manner sit down with
 him in his throne *Rev. iii. 21.* They will
 meet to be crowned and exalted, to be re-
 warded and glorified with an eternal weight
 of glory, which will far outshine all the
 grandeur of the greatest mortal kings. *Here*
 they were striving and groaning together for
 the prize, and perhaps parted with many
 fears and doubts what would be the issue,
 but *there* they shall be seated in an everlast-
 ing kingdom, in the kingdom of God, where
 all is safe and secure; not in men's uneasy
 tottering

tottering kingdoms, where violence and disturbance so often enter. SERM. VI.

OF what has been said I shall make the following application.

I. THIS may afford matter of delightful contemplation upon the separating of endeared friends. Many such occasions there be besides that of death; sometimes a kind providence separates those, who were linked by troubles only, as is partly the present case with respect to some of us; sometimes unhappy dissensions make a *Paul* and *Barnabas* to separate; and sometimes other occasions: And tho' they may be very ungrateful, as was the case of the *Ephesians* upon *St. Paul's* leaving them, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more *Acts* xx. 38. yet it is a pleasure to think, that tho' we and our holy friends may be scattered to the four winds, we shall one day meet again in a better condition than when we parted here. Many a man is by necessity forced abroad into distant countries, he fears, and his family and friends fear, that he or they may die before his return, and perhaps it proves so, and the man is troubled to die at a distance from his own relations,

SERM. VI. *lations, and so are they; but among good men it is in the main much the same, for as they never die out of the reach of God's providence, so one country is as near heaven as another, where they are to meet again. How may a Christian feast on such a ravishing contemplation!*

OUR gathering together unto Christ is a very weighty point, as *St. Paul* intimates in obtesting Christians by it *2 Theff. ii. 1. Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.* Oh great and glorious society, when the most excellent persons of all ages, and of all quarters of the world shall assemble! We need not with *St. Austin* wish to see Christ in the flesh or *St. Paul* otherwise than here: We have heard of patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and confessors, but then they will come together, and our lamented dear friends will come also, and all will sit down in sweet delightful society, in love and triumph, free from trouble and want, never to part more by any contention, adversity, or other occasion.

NAY why may I not by a figure interpret the words in the text of many, who are as distant as East and West in their several opinions,

nions, that they shall come together, as all good men shall, tho' of different speculations, *For in every nation be, that feareth God and worketh righteousness, shall be accepted of him,*

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VI.

Acts x. 35. Many, who in their foolish confarious pride and ignorance disown one another now, shall be both of them owned by their common heavenly Father, who is more merciful than they; altho' nothing offends him more than such uncharitable arrogance in condemning another's servants. Unskilful husbandmen may rashly pluck up the wheat with the tares, but God will gather them into his garner. Oh blessed sight, to behold all meeting in love and affection, whom ignorance or uncharitableness had here divided unjustly! God shall annul all their mutual anathemas and hereticating censures.

SIT we down then and think of that day, when the angels shall be sent forth to make this mighty gathering, and none who are sincere shall be left out; behold them flocking from all quarters in innumerable throngs, sat down, feasting, and rejoicing together. *Here* they parted with groans and tears, *there* they shall meet in joy and comfort; *here* they sorrowed, that they should see each other's faces

SERM. faces no more, there they will rejoice, that
 VI. they shall never lose sight of them again.

2. THIS should provoke us to diffusive extensive love to all good men now every where, since they are to be our dear companions hereafter. We shall be nearer one day, therefore, let them be East or West, North or South, we should join in love and agreement, in mutual prayers, and sympathizing affections. The church mystical you see is of a wide extent, not shut up in one quarter, as some censorious monopolizers would pretend, but diffuses and extends itself to holy men of all places and denominations.

3. LET us all endeavour, that we may meet in this great and glorious meeting, that we may be of the number of those holy practical Christians, who shall be admitted to sit down in that kingdom, for sad and grievous will it be to be thrust out; and yet this will be the case of many children of the visible gospel kingdom.

WE, my brethren, are turn'd abroad into a loose world, and if there be burdens in adversities and bonds, there are snares in liberty and ease. Let us then beware what society we delight in here, a companion of fools shall

shall be destroyed; companions in cups and pleasure promote not any fitness for that glorious society. If eating and drinking in Christ's presence will not avail, much less will doing so in a sensual course without regard to his presence.

BEWARE of a supine remissness in secret duties; religion is not to be kept alive without praying to our father in secret: Our troubles should at least teach us to pray more than ever, for this will fetch in help at all times, and more especially in time of affliction. Let trouble be remembered to good purpose, that we sin no more; many grow worse by having their liberty, and make their spiritual bonds more strong. Remember we lose a great help, if afflictions be not improved, and worse will follow: There is a prison, from which no act of grace or favour will deliver for ever.

4. OBSERVE the wise methods of God's providence: This is not the place designed by God for our fixed abode, but here he trains up his servants for their heavenly home; thither he has been gathering his most excellent servants from time to time, one after another, till all generations be gathered into

K

eternity;

SERM. eternity; then the body shall be raised in
 VI. glory, and all meet together at the marriage
 of the lamb.

FINALLY, remember we must all stand and meet again at a solemn place, the bar of the great Judge. Oh that we be not then scattered, some only for heaven, and others for hell, one taken and another left! That we be not then fellow-sufferers in the eternal dungeon! That we mind the one thing needful, and be more anxious for securing our salvation than for all the comforts of this life! Let us live in constant awe of God, and work out our salvation with holy trembling; content with a little here, so that we may honour God and lay up treasure in heaven. Let us so live, that we may be blessings in our day, sanctifying the places of our abode with holy conversation, example, and counsel; and then, my brethren, we may hope, and let it be our concluding prayer, (and God grant the wish,) that we, who now part in a prison, may meet again for ever in paradise. *Amen.*

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SERMON VII.

*Absolute confidence to be placed
in God alone **

PSALM cxviii. ver. 9.

*It is better to trust in the Lord, than to
put confidence in princes.*

WHILST we are yet under the
mournful impressions of that sur-
prizing stroke, which has smitten
down to the ground one of the greatest lives
in the world; whilst we are under the re-
buke of that rod, whose voice is so loud as to
be heard over all the reformed churches in
Europe, whilst we have in our view so affect-
ing a demonstration of the vanity of all hu-
man

* Preached at Dublin March 22. 170 $\frac{1}{2}$, on occasion of the
much-lamented death of that glorious prince K. William III.

SERM. man hopes, it highly concerns us to make

VII. some serious improvement of so awful an e-

vent; an event so grievous, that it tempts us to cry out, as *David* upon the fall of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, *Oh tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the Philistines rejoice*: Let it not be told abroad, that *Britain* and *Ireland* have lost so mighty a defender both of their faith and their liberties, under whose shadow we have sat with great delight, and sweetly enjoyed the fruit of his serene and wise government. It is not meet we should so soon forget those memorable princely excellencies, that noble bravery of mind, that sedate and deep wisdom, that catholic healing spirit, that concern for the public interest of religion, and that generous propensity to the most deffusive goodness, which so conspicuously possess'd that great soul, and shone so brightly in the glorious enterprizes of his life; I say it is not meet, nor possible so easily to forget so many heroic virtues and glorious achievements, which will not fail to transmit his most amiable character and grateful memory to many succeeding generations.

NAY, this stroke is the more bitter, because it opens the wound which was but lately closed, and makes it bleed afresh in the renewed

renewed remembrance of that excellent prince, who first led the way, in which her (now no longer surviving) consort has followed her. We need but look back a little more than seven years to remember how happy we were in that royal pair, which were the glory of our land, and the joy of our hearts: But now alas! what work has death made in a few years in extinguishing two such lives almost at once? two such eclipses so near cannot but astonish and alarm a considerate mind. Surely God is calling us to observe of how little value all human confidence is, and to entertain our minds with such reflections as this in the text, *viz.* that in him alone, our quieting confidence can be wisely lodged.

UPON what particular occasion this psalm was penned is not known; it seems to have been written upon some eminent victory over potent enemies, it is a song of triumph, in which *David* ascribes the success not to his own arm, but to God's, which did valiant things; and if in the midst of so great success, when probably *David* and his princes had contributed to it by their wisdom and valour, he could yet make so little account of mighty

SERM. VII. princes in circumstances of triumph, when apt to be puffed up with their own vain-glorious thoughts, or others loud applauses, how much more sensibly may we make this reflexion on the vanity of such princes, when we behold them laid in the dust at the feet of death?

David had in the foregoing verse said in general, it is better to trust in God than in man, but lest it should be interpreted only of ordinary men, he here adds in the next words, that he means it of the *greatest men*, who offer the highest temptations to our confidence, but yet nothing in comparison of the invitations, which the divine perfections afford us to put our hope in God. For the text prefers confidence in God to any trust in princes.

WE are not to understand this as absolutely condemning all subordinate trust in such persons, as the instruments of divine providence, for since God usually works by means, it naturally raises some hopes in us to see means fitted for our use: To see a mighty prince disposed to seek a people's good by eminent principles of clemency, justice, and generous goodness; to behold in him that bravery and wisdom, which gives him answerable ability, must

must needs excite some expectations, which are not wholly unreasonable, when they are of an inferior nature; nor is this any invasion upon the honour of God, when it is only in subordination to, and dependance upon his pleasure and power, as the great director and controller of all.

BUT the words plainly imply these two things,

I. THAT it is not safe nor wise to put any secure confidence in the greatest men.

II. THAT we may safely put our trust in God.

I. THAT it is not safe to put an absolute confidence in princes, will appear from these reasons.

I. BECAUSE princes, as well as others, are subject to corruption and unfaithfulness. There are moral qualifications of conscience and honour, truth, justice, and honesty, which are required as the foundation of any great and secure trust: now as degenerate mankind are full of deceit, or at least may be so under temptation, God alone is true, and every man may be a liar, which warrants a wary caution in all our dealings even with men of the fairest character: So princes them-

K 4 selves,

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VII.

selves, who are but men, are not above all danger of this contagion and blemish, tho' in them it is more odious and pernicious, because the trust reposed in them is so great. Nay the Psalmist, tho' a great prince himself, intimates that such are more apt to deceive than others, and says *men of high degree are a lye*, *Psalm lxii. 9.* either because their temptations and opportunities are greater, or because more feel the effects of such a disappointment; and he makes use of that consideration to divert or moderate our trust in them. And alas, how often have miserable oppressed nations found the truth of this by costly experience, whilst they have groaned under the tyranny of unfaithful rulers, who have betrayed the trust reposed in them by God and man? Who of us has not heard of princes and kings, that have taken oaths and made solemn promises with a design to break them, that have sworn to preserve the religion and government which they abhorred, and with wretched perfidiousness have presently conspired to undermine them? and this either because they scorned to be slaves to their words, or would not keep faith with heretics, or made no conscience of an oath? How many

many poor people are there abroad in the world, whose rulers are become thieves and robbers instead of protectors; who count their subjects not their charge but their prey, and stick not to gratify their own ambition and lust at the expence of the lives and liberties of thousands. This is unfaithfulness to the ends of government and to the commission they have from God, which is to be his ministers for good to their people.

BUT I need not insist upon this consideration, which supposes princes may be treacherous, since this was not the thing, wherein our confidence failed us in relation to that great prince, who is now removed: He indeed was greatly trusted with our national interests in a time of great extremity, when all was confused at home, and threatening abroad; but he abused not that trust by oppressing our liberties, or betraying us to our enemies; He was not so ambitious of the unenvy'd glory of some of his neighbours in being public murderers and robbers, nor coveted any share in his character, who goes about seeking whom he may devour; no, his highest ambition was to be a faithful nursing-father to his people.

2. BUT

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2. BUT a second reason, arises from the consideration of their unavoidable and natural infirmities, which belong to all men, even the best. For any thing that appears to the contrary the text may speak of the best and mightiest princes, and yet we may not expect very much from them.

SUPPOSE them such as are more glorious within in real excellencies than in all their external regalia and pomp, rather adorning the throne and giving lustre to the crown than deriving any from it: Suppose them animated with a glorious ambition to be public benefactors, and fill'd with compassionate designs of relief to all, and this conjoined with the most magnanimous prowess and courage, able to exert itself in the highest gallantry of great and daring exploits with all wisdom and conduct: In a word, (to suppose more than all this,) suppose such a glorious prince as we have now lost, yet alas, they are but men encompassed with infirmities; which we may consider in two instances.

(1.) THEY are but feeble and limited agents, and can do but little compared with God. The principal part of their ability is to defend from evil, and to hinder others from

from doing hurt. The best princes seem to be as those *Zech. i. 20, 21.* they are raised up as carpenters to break those horns, that push at *Judah* and *Jerusalem*; and yet how many are those grievances, which they cannot redress? How many are those sons of *Zerviah*, which are too hard for them? In how many cases do the men of might lose their hands, and the counsels of the wise are carried headlong? So the upshot of all their brave endeavours is only this, *magnis tamen excidit ausis*, they aimed well but left the enterprize unfinished. Should we apply to them under any immediate judgment from heaven, and cry, as she did in the time of famine, *Help, O king*, the greatest monarch on earth must own his impotency by that reply, *Unless the Lord help you, whence should I help?* *2 Kings vii. 27.* And even in those matters, for which we judge them sufficient instruments, they are oft restrained by God, on whom they depend for success; they may bring to the birth, and yet have no strength to bring forth; may prepare the horse for the battle, and yet not command victory; may forge weapons for war, but cannot make them prosper; God may cross them in their

SERM. their designs of building a nation, as he did

VII. *David* in that of building his temple; in short, they are weak and finite creatures, who guess in the dark, are mistaken in their judgments, deceived in their informations, and imposed on by their counsellors. We are foolish therefore, if we take those titles of *Invincible, Infallible, or Unerring*, when applied to men, to be any other than sordid and extravagant flattery.

Now who can reasonably presume much on such limited agents, whose power is so narrow, and their arm so short, are posed and nonplus'd in so many cases? and where they do accomplish any thing that is great, it is not owing to *their* arm, but to the greater influence of the supreme King of Kings.

(2.) THEY are mortal dust of the same composition with ourselves. Great potentates may flatter themselves, as tho' they were of another make and mould than the meaner sort; they may disdain alliance to common blood, but for all that the Psalmist observes, they are subject to the same fate of mortality, and that shews the vanity of affecting so vast a distance; *I have said ye are gods, but you shall die like men, Psal. lxxxii. 6, 7.* The loftiest

tiest head must stoop, and lay its massy honours in the dust; Death pays no deference to crowned heads, all earthly kings are tributary to the king of terrors. It enters the palace and climbs the throne, it rudely wrests the scepter from the royal hand, undresses them of their stately robes, and tramples on all their majesty and glory, *Ubi Cæsaris magnificentia? Quò nunc abiit pulchritudo tua?* said one standing at Cæsar's tomb. Where is any remain of majesty then? The greatest monarchs are but as that bright image *Dan. ii. 32, 33.* tho' the head was gold, and the thighs brass, yet the feet were of clay; on so brittle a foundation does all worldly glory and power stand. The best and mightiest princes (as was said of *David Acts xiii. 36.*) after serving their generation a while must fall asleep, and then they are as insignificant as other men; their remains may be revered for a time with pompous mourning in tragic state, for there is a majesty in solemn grief, but when laid by a while in the tomb all are alike. Who, that rakes among the ashes of the dead, can distinguish or say, *This* is royal dust, and *that* is beggarly mould; *This* was the head that wore the crown and the

SERM. the laurel, and *that* the head, which had not

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a hole to lie in; This was the arm that did valiant things, and that the hand used to serve vile labour? For this reason we are taught to moderate our confidence in them Psal. cxvi. 3, 4. *Their breath goeth forth, and then all their thoughts perish; their royal devices come to nought. It supposes kings may sometimes be full of great and generous thoughts for the people's good, (for government is an anxious employ, and he that aims at being a public good must study and forecast, and not let all run at random; while he drenches himself in luxury and pleasure,) but death deprives us of all the benefit of their kind intentions.*

(Few princes have so much public spirit, so much deliberate forecast, and wise precaution, as to redeem their useful thoughts from being lost at their death, by leaving their digested schemes for public service. It was a singular instance of the wisdom and tender care of our late glorious prince, (as well as of his serious apprehensions of approaching death,) that he had any such things in so deliberate a readiness, like one who expected to die, and was resolved to die with

as much advantage to others as he could, or as he used to live.

HOWEVER death breaks off the train of those thoughts for ever; They mind us no more, can serve us no longer, and therefore are not much to be relied on, as a refuge. What a poor security of a nation's happiness are two or three princely lives? for so many have we lost in about seven years space. We have seen one die in her full strength and in the prime of life, another has languished and decayed away, besides a third nipt in the bud. What vain props are these for a nation's security, which is supposed to survive for many generations? If such might always live, we think perhaps the public would be provided for, but since many alarms of their frailty raise frequent jealousies and fears, and they must certainly die soon, this tells us it is not good to put great trust in them.

II. I COME now to the second general, viz. That it is more wise and safe by far to trust in God, because none of these exceptions lie against him. For

1. HE is a most just and gracious Being, who for certain will keep his covenant and promise

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promise with all faithfulness and truth; His goodness and his truth may be relied on, for none is so just and so good as he; and those princes who are most faithful and true, are but an image of him therein.

2. HE has infinite unlimited ability *Dan. iv. 35.* If he engage for a people, he can raise them from a sinking estate to be the head and top over all. He can overturn armies and counsels, for there is no wisdom nor power can stand against him. He is of infinite wisdom, and has a comprehensive view of all mens motions and projects, and so cannot be deceived in his measures; he is also of infinite strength *Psal. lxxxix. 8, 9, 10.* He can be terrible to the kings of the earth, and cut off the spirit of princes, he can make weak things to confound the strong, so that the worm *Jacob* shall arise, and thresh the mountains small, and the hills like chaff, *Isa. xli. 14, 15.*

3. HE endures for ever, his years decay not, nor do his thoughts perish. The course of nature will not last so long as he, who saw the beginning, and will see the end of heaven and earth, *Psal. cii. 26, 27.* No disease nor indisposition can obstruct him in the

exercise of his care ; *From everlasting to everlasting thou art God*, says the Psalmist *Psal.* xc. 1, 2. and observes hereupon, that he was *Israel's* refuge in all generations, not the benefit of one age only, but from age to age ; and he reigns as long as he lives, for he is the king immortal and eternal ; no sons of violence can dethrone him, whose throne remains for ever and ever. And upon this account he is a better object of trust than any other. Here we may quietly rest under the refuge of an eternal God, who will surely outlive all our enemies, which we may fear will arise, and will outlive all our posterity, for whom we are concerned, and for whose sake we so earnestly covet his continual care.

I SHALL now proceed to make some application of the foregoing discourse.

I. WE may hence learn a very humbling instruction concerning the vanity of all human hopes and worldly confidence : For where can we repose our expectation, if not in mighty and good princes ? What can we look for in lesser matters, if in the greatest and most valuable persons we cannot lodge our trust without continual fear all along, and disappointment at last ? If men of high de-

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SERM. VII.  gree are a lye, and men of low degree are vanity, which way then shall we turn, high or low, for security? Where shall we find rest for the soles of our feet, since the very pillars of the earth are unstable as water? If eminent desert or high esteem, if great usefulness, or the passionate affections of many could have secured life, we had still trusted under that royal shadow, which is now gone away as a withering gourd. How then can we wonder if our private comforts fail us, if our friends die and ourselves expire, when such as are worth ten thousand of us die in the midst of their days and of our hopes? Oh then! let us cease from mortal men, and mortal concerns, for what are they to be accounted of?

2. YET all this does not forbid us to express a great value for princes that are truly good. Indeed it limits our esteem of them, as of subordinate dependent instruments, but yet so consider'd they are most valuable blessings, when they rule in the fear of God, and are promoters of justice, piety, and peace; they do good to the bodies and souls of millions; they are suns in their orbs; multitudes rejoice in their light, and are cherished by it,
and

and cannot but regard them with honour and love, nor can such fail to be had in an everlasting remembrance, more savoury than that of the most precious ointment.

AND indeed in our case, who can be other than grateful to the memory of so endeared a prince, so great a benefactor, and so signal an instrument of God's providence for such amazing and kind purposes? We have lost a wise and vigilant protector, who had a soul big enough to animate two bodies politic, and to discharge all its functions with a vigorous influence; one, who according to the nice judgment of a very able statesman was in his younger days of celebrated wisdom and penetration, not that wisdom, (says Sir *William Temple*) which is neither useful to a man's self nor others, but that solid wisdom, which fits a man for application to weighty business; not so much what enabled him to talk as to do: not only to do, but to bear much, which is beyond all the ordinary instances of valour. *For he, that ruleth his spirit, is better than he, that taketh a city.* Prov. xvi. 32.

WE have lost a great and valiant general, one who could inspire an army with bravery and

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courage, whose whole life was a scene of gallantry and great undertakings, (nor had he wore the crown, if he had not so well wore the helmet,) not one who was afraid to be seen at the head of his army in war, except in their flight, but in the hottest of the battle, and tho' always through great mercy found alive, yet it was amidst the greatest numbers of the slain: A prince that talked little, and boasted less, but by the loud language of his great exploits was heard of far and near with honour and reverence, as his death is now with universal grief and lamentation in all the reformed churches, and farther.

NOR yet was he set on by so base motives, as the ambition and lusts of tyrants suggest; for certainly for a prince to employ his power to terrify the weak and innocent, to invade his neighbours merely for the glory of his arms and the enlarging his conquests, to be prodigal of blood and do a thousand barbarous things to gratify his devilish pride, I say, these things make up the most odious character, by which the memory of a prince can be made infamous to posterity, who will only have it to say, that such an one was a malignant plague in his time: But I am speaking

speaking of one, who always drew the sword as the champion of justice, and the succourer of the oppressed. The glory of his ancestors, which was to be compassionate defenders, and not unjust invaders, never shone with more lustre than in him, who has brought up the rear with such honour, that the last may be said to be the first.

A TRULY public spirit reigned in his breast, as a common father to all, his throne was never stained with persecution or violence to conscience, which being the worst sort of unrighteous oppression was the farthest from finding room in that generous mind; nor yet was this from a careless contempt of religion, for how frequent a solicitor was he in the uncontested cause of religion, *viz.* public practical reformation?

IN short, he was one, that needs not the pious fraud of an *Εἰκὼν Βασιλική*, or any feigned portraiture to set off his memory, who himself has left us so many monuments of his princely virtues. In the deliverance of these nations from popery and slavery we have a standing memorial of his *generous zeal for our religion and liberties*, which he so bravely rescued from the brink of ruin. In

SERM. the recovery of this kingdom we have a mo-
 VII. nument of his own *personal conduct and va-*
 lour, as well as of God's mercy in his emi-
 nent deliverance; We have a monument of
 his *religious virtue* in the wholesome laws
 he has left us against profaneness; and the
 care he took of settling a protestant succession;
 And of his *healing catholic spirit*, which was
 above the bigotry of a party, in the reversal
 of those persecuting laws, which had been
 the shame of former kings, and almost the
 utter ruin of their kingdoms: Under him we
 had the Apostle's wish of living peaceable
 lives in godliness and honesty: In a word he
 has not only renewed the face of our coin, but
 that of our kingdom too. Thus he served his
 own generation before he fell asleep, and I
 doubt not but the generations to come will
 rise up and call him blessed; for there was
 no king in our *Israel* before him, that was
 like unto him, and I wish any such may
 ever arise after him; so diligently, so entirely
 devoted to the public good of mankind.

HOWEVER, in the midst of our amazing
 grief we have reason to bless God, that he
 raised up so glorious an instrument, that he
 did such great things for us by him, that he
 preserved

preserved him so long in the midst of open wars and secret conspiracies, that he has happily survived his dangerous rival, (I mean to us dangerous,) that he has lived to settle the royal succession in the protestant line, that so *Rome's* vassals may no more trample on the *British* throne or betray its crown, and to enter into such alliances and form that scene, of whose conclusion we have entertained such great hopes.

AND now that this bright star is set, the great God can make others to arise in some other horizon, who may promote the same designs. Nor is it to be forgotten that at home is a princess to succeed, whose steadfastness to the reformed religion under dangerous temptations warrants our hope, that she will vigorously defend it both at home and abroad; and one so nearly allied to that late excellent princess, whose admirable virtues have yet so fragrant and lively a remembrance among us, that we cannot wish a greater felicity for these lands than to see the throne filled with such another.

3. LET this then be our comfort, that after all our disappointment from mortal princes we still have that God to trust in, who

SERM. is a much better object of our confidence.
 VII. This used to be an allay to good men's troubles in such a case: When they had lost the breath of their nostrils, viz. their king, and the crown was fallen from their heads, then they retreated to God, *But thou Lord remainest for ever, and thy throne to all generations, Lamen. v. 19. so Psal. cxlvi. 4, 10. He is our king, he is our judge, and he can save us, whether by few, or by many.* And this is a very quieting thought in the midst of all confusions and revolutions, that an almighty all-wise God reigns, whose counsels shall stand to all generations. *If God therefore be for us, who can be against us? Rom. viii. 31.*

WHAT remains then, but that we endeavour to engage this God, that he may be on our side, and then, as *David* did a little before the text, we may defy all all our enemies round about: And this must be done,

1. BY a deep repentance, which this rod calls for, for tho' princes die through frailty, yet it may be hastened, or timed so as to carry the marks of God's manifest wrath; Thus it is expressly threatned, that if the people do wickedly, God will *cut off their king*, 1 Sam. xii. 25.

Let

Let us then be humble under this rebuke, and no more hate to be reformed, lest he proceed to *cut us off also*. SERM.
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2. BY exercising an honourable dependance on God, accounting more of and expecting more from him, than from the greatest princes or their most numerous armies, which we should always consider to be but in subordination to him.

3. BY ardent prayer, in which we are to express our trust in him by pouring out our hearts before him, that so God may be a refuge for us *Psal. lxii. 8.* For *Zion's* sake let us not hold our peace nor give him any rest, until he make his shattered *Jerusalem* the praise of the whole earth.



Let us then be humble under this rebuke, and
no more hate to be reformed, lest he proceed.

VII.

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rest, until he make his banner
the praise of the whole earth.



SERMON

S E R M O N V I I I .

*Our obedience to God must be
absolute and entire.*

MARK X. 22.

*And he was sad at that saying, and went
away grieved ; for he had great possessions.*

TH E S E words represent to us the deplorable issue of a very hopeful affair transacted between our Lord Jesus and a seemingly well inclined young man. The matter was of no less concernment than his everlasting salvation ; and pity it was that it should miscarry, that any one, who had a concern to be saved, should drop short, or that any, who come to Christ, should go away sorrowful ; but yet so it was with the
young

SERM. young man in the text, who puts a serious
VIII. question to our Lord, not without some ear-

nest concern, ver. 17. *Good master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?*

It seems, that his heart was under some conviction and feeling of the weight of that important affair, which made him put the question for help and direction ; for surely he had no other design, since our Saviour saw much good inclination in him, that moved his affection for him, ver. 21. *Then Jesus beholding him loved him.* For answer to his question our Lord gives him serious counsel, viz. that he must obediently resign himself to the authority and commands of God, some instances of which he mentions ; for indeed there is no other way to life by Christ himself, but by a sincere subjection of our heart and ways to the great God with reverence, and holy love, and faith in Christ.

THIS young man having too narrow conceptions of holy sincere obedience, and reckoning himself innocent, because free from all outward gross transgressions of these commandments, replies with some pleasure and confidence, that he had been practising this counsel all his life ; he now thinks all is well, and

must be absolute and entire.

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and begins almost to triumph; but he was not so ready and forward in his obedience, as he imagined, as appears in the sequel, for Christ has one word more to say before the matter be determined, *viz.* to put his obedience to the trial whether it was so intire and hearty as he required and the other pretended, whether any lust or worldly object was competitor with the authority of God, or whether he was willing to resign all in obedience and take God's favour and promises for the recompence: *One thing thou lackest*, says our Lord to him, *Go thy way, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, come and take up the cross and follow me.* But here he refuses subjection, he is for pursuing the matter no farther; after this proposition all goes back again, *He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.* The former denotes the sadness that appeared in his countenance and dejected looks, the other the grief and trouble of his mind; he could not tell how to resolve upon parting with all in this world, and yet could not but grieve and lament to think he should miss of eternal life in the other.

FROM

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FROM these words I shall make the following observations.

I. I observe, that he, who knowingly persists in one instance of resolved disobedience to the laws of God, will certainly be rejected by him and forfeit his claim to eternal life, whatever obedience he may have given in other instances. It was upon this, that Christ and the young man broke off, *he went away*. He found our Lord would not receive him because one thing was lacking, and having no hope of prevailing he departs without success; for the following reflexion, which Christ makes on the case, *How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* shews the desperate condition he went away in, tho' he had kept the other commandments even from his youth.

NOR are we to think he will deal with us upon easier terms, or that we shall ever inherit eternal life, if we resolvedly continue to refuse obedience to any one of his commandments, because it may seem harsh and burdensome. There never was any man yet sincere in his obedience to God, who did not consent and resolve on universal subjection in every

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every point : However he might fall short in the measure or degree of accomplishment, or unhappily interrupt it by turning aside to the right or to the left, yet surely he never set at nought any precept, or lived in a chosen defiance to the authority of his maker in any instance. If for any time he did so, tho' it were but in one single point of obedience, so long was he fallen from his integrity. *David* well understood this, *Psalms* cxix. ver. 6, where he tells us, that the strength of his confidence towards God could no otherwise be supported but by the universality of his obedience, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments ; if there were one commandment to which he had not respect, shame would cover him still.* And *St. James* confirms this, chap. ii. ver. 10. *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all ;* therefore by assuring us, that all our more numerous instances of subjection are utterly sunk and lost in our settled refusal of one law ; for so I understand him, not of an unwary accidental act, but of an habitual refusal of a less, or a presumptuous opposition to a greater commandment. How then shall he, who is thus

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guilty

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guilty of all, be able to stand in the day of accounts? forasmuch as there is no repentance, while that one commandment is still refused.

NOR can it indeed be expected, that any value should be put on all our compliances with other duties, since a known and chosen disobedience to this one shews the man to be under the dominion of sin and in rebellion against his maker. Since there is a point, in which he will not yield to God neither for his commands nor threatnings, his sovereignty is rejected in the renunciation of his law, and the mind, which cannot be subject to the law of God, is carnal and at enmity against him, *Rom. viii. 7.* The soul therefore, that sins presumptuously, shall die, if he persists in it. For this contempt of God's authority in an allowed settled and persevering course of a known and chosen sin is the highest aggravation of guilt beyond what arises merely from the matter of the sin itself, and makes a less fault swell into a greater abomination than it might otherwise seem to be, and of an higher rank than when committed ignorantly or by sudden surprize, because it is done with more malignity

must be absolute and entire.

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lignity and with a deliberate settled contempt of the majesty of heaven. SERM.
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THE great aim of true religion and of the divine government is to bring the creature to an absolute subjection to the will of God; and the great contest between God and the sinner is, whose will shall take place; the almighty cannot renounce his sovereignty, *As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, Isa. xlv. 23.* He is an holy jealous God, and will not give his peculiar glory to another; so that to refuse any one known law is to contend with our maker, to sin with an high hand, and to fix limits to his dominion; but unless we yield, he will break us with a rod of iron; what else can be the issue of such a contention?

IT is to be feared there are some, who, tho' they pretend reverence for God's commands, and do many things, and abstain from many crimes out of conscience towards God, do yet venture to make some reserve and exception, who, tho' they know they live in the customary practice of some particular sin, which easily besets them, and are the servants of that sin, which captivates them in almost every assault, yet they continually give

M way

SERM. way to it, and never come to a serious resolution of breaking it off. It is so pleasing
 VIII.  to their violent lusts, or so suitable to their condition and calling, or so advantageous to their trade and livelihood, or would expose them to the reproach or ridicule of their companions, who would think it strange if they should yield to such a thing as conscience, and run not still with them into the same excess of riot, that they cannot think of abandoning their vicious practices, or of making restitution, where they know God requires it; They resolve rather to venture the worst, and hope notwithstanding they shall be forgiven; and that since it is but in one point they offend, while they are very dutiful in many others, and it might go near to ruin them in the world if they paid obedience to it, they hope God will dispense with it.

BUT let such consider, if the young man in the text had not all this to say: He had kept the commandments in all the instances of ordinary duty, Christ says he lacked but one thing, by complying with which he must have been reduced to nothing in the world, and cast upon providence, and yet none of these things

must be absolute and entire.

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things excused him, Christ rejected him for all this, and he is represented as one lost. Will you then after all this flatter your selves in any one instance of resolved disobedience? Will Christ receive and own you in another world, who would not receive one such for his follower in this? You see then how absolute our obedience must be in order to the obtaining eternal life.

I would not strain matters to carry religion to impracticable heights; or to disquiet any man's mind to whom God speaks peace; but I must not forbear to tell you the truth; when it is of so much consequence; and judge you if it be not plain. Yet mistake me not, I am not saying, that every one, who ignorantly lives in the neglect of a duty, or presumptuously sins with deliberation; will be put out of the capacity of being saved; No, beyond doubt many an excellent man has very grievously and daringly offended, not only when his principles have been dormant and reason and conscience off their guard, but with deliberation; and yet has recovered and found mercy; but then it was not till after they had submitted and yielded themselves to God in the lowest abasements of a broken

SERM. and a contrite heart : But I say the man, who
 VIII. persists in the refusal of his known duty in any
 one point, has no good claim to the promise of
 eternal life, for this supposes a presumptuous
 sin continued in without repentance.

THERE is a wide difference between a man's transgressing a law against his settled resolution and usual practice of obedience, and his never once consenting to obey it ; between his turning aside from the right way, in which he did walk, and his never resolving to enter into it : The language of the one is like that of *David, Psalm cxix. ver. 176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments ;* but the language of the other is like that of the obstinate Jews in *Egypt, As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord we will not hearken unto thee, Jer. xlv. 16.*

BUT I expect the sinner will plead in his own cause, that the case in the text was a peculiar and particular one, and that our Lord with unusual rigour treated this young man, requiring what was beyond the ordinary measures of obedience, and that therefore we must not hence draw rules for others, from whom the ordinary measures only are expected with
 more

must be absolute and entire.

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more favourable allowances than were made to him at this time of special trial. But this is all a vain delusion, for tho' the particular instance of selling all and giving to the poor may not be commanded us, yet whatever is commanded us is bound on us as peremptorily as that was on him, and our obedience thereto is as indispensable as his. And indeed the more extraordinary rigour there seems to be in the precept, the more room there was for an excuse, that eternal life might not be set at an higher price and on harder terms to him than to the rest of mankind, whilst the duties enjoined on us are common to all and so more indispensable.

AND yet in truth it was not so, here was no more rigorous severity used towards this young man than towards all Christians, except in what was circumstantial: He was only put upon the actual doing of that, which all Christians are bound to be in a readiness to do, when called upon, *viz.* to quit all that is dear to flesh and blood. Was there more in this than in quitting house and land, father and mother, and even life it self, which yet all Christians are required to be in a readiness to do, *Mat. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26?* Was

SERM. any man ever exempted from these condi-
 VIII. tions of discipleship and salvation? Or are
 these terms any where abated? The difficul-
 ty is not so much in actual parting with these
 things, when the mind is framed aright into
 a real willingness, as it is in bringing it into
 that willingness by denying ourselves, and
 conquering our love to the flesh and the world
 by a superior love to God and Christ, and a
 superlative esteem for the glorious things of a
 joyful eternity. Now this hardest part we
 must all be brought to, or we shall be none
 of Christ's disciples, so that the difference is
 not so great as is pretended.

WE bless God indeed justly, that we are
 not put on those dangerous trials, that we are
 not persecuted nor afflicted, because in all things
 we must give thanks, and we do well to re-
 joice, because we should always rejoice in the
 Lord even in divers tribulations, *Jam. i. 2.*
 But if it be only the triumphs of a carnal
 mind, that is an enemy to the cross of Christ,
 because it minds only earthly things; if we
 bless our selves that we lived not in those a-
 postolical times, when a Christian and a Mar-
 tyr were very near a-kin, because we cannot
 deny our appetites and desires, we much de-
 lude

lude ourselves, for there is always occasion for that in cutting off a right hand and abandoning a darling sin. If we are exempted from the severer exercises of self-denial in actual bearing the cross, we are for certain inexcusable, if we give not this proof of it by forsaking with sincere resolution and habitual practice every known sin. In vain then do we flatter ourselves, that we shall have easier terms of salvation now, or that our righteous judge will bear with our allowed refusal of obedience in any one point.

LET us then search our hearts and try our ways, and see if there be any evil way in us, and forsake it. If conscience tell you there is one thing lacking in you, one duty you have neglected, one evil you have customarily practised, resolve this day to yield the point to God and your conscience; write a bill of divorce to your most favourite sins, make no account of your keeping the other commandments, unless your submission be intire; think it not hard that your obedience must be universal, spare not the right eye, the one, the only thing you would have spared, for it is better to enter into life having one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire. But perhaps you

SERM. will say, that tho' you do not forsake your
 VIII. fins, yet you are greatly troubled at them. I
 would therefore observe to you in the second
 place,

II. THAT it is possible and not unusual for men to depart from the way of their duty and the path of life with a great deal of grief and sore regret, and yet persist therein to their ruin. They are sometimes very uneasy and dissatisfied in their evil courses, yet this neither reclaims them from their sin, nor excuses them in it. Be they never so disquieted and vexed with their evil choice, so long as they hold fast the cause of their grief, they must hold fast the sad consequences of it. You see it was the case of this young man, he went away with a sad countenance and a grieved heart from his duty and his real interest, and quits the pursuit of his too faintly desired salvation with as much fear and trembling, as that with which others work out theirs.

I. MANY a sinner is greatly troubled at the thoughts of the evil way he has chosen and walks in; he forsakes his duty, but his heart tells him he has made an ill choice, and wronged

wronged his own soul, and leaves him full of confusion. There needs no more to cause this grief in him, but that he be convinced he breaks the laws of God, and that he have some tender sense of the doleful consequence of his displeasure; both which may remain in a sinner, when his innocence and integrity are gone, to make him uneasy, when it could not make him good, to represent his folly, when it could not make him wise, and to aggravate his danger, when it could not make him safe.

ALL indeed, who reject our Lord Jesus, do not go away thus grieved; some miserable sinners there are fast bound in the bonds of iniquity, so ignorant and hardened as not to be grieved, at least not to appear sad; they make light of the offer'd favour of God, as is said of some *Mat. xxii. 5.* pleasant and easy in their sensual courses, as if they had done well in putting from them eternal life, and had made a good bargain in saving their worldly interest and fleshly lusts, tho' at the risque and hazard of their immortal souls; but as it has cost them many a pang to arrive at such an harden'd temper, so they are not all, who are thus past feeling.

THERE

SERM. **VIII.** **T**HERE may be others so ignorant as scarcely to discern between good and evil, the way to life and the way to death; but surely the generality of sinners under the light of the gospel and the lamps of the sanctuary know better the nature of religion, and what a dangerous thing it is to rebel against God; They know full well, that they, who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And even those, who are under the light of nature, may by the law written in their hearts know the judgment of God, that they, who do such things, are worthy of death.

THEY therefore, who know they are acting in contradiction to their duty, tho' the influence of their vicious passions be superior to the motives of conscience and religion, must needs find some gall and wormwood in the very pleasures of sin, some struggles of an oppressed conscience, some sad misgivings of a reluctant doubtful mind: While they indulge themselves in forbidden gratifications, they flatter themselves with groundless hopes of something or other, but they are afraid again, that after all they will not hold. They have heard so much of heaven and of the worth of souls, that they cannot give them

must be absolute and entire.

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VIII.

pp without some inward sighs or groans, some conflict and anguish ; they sometimes start and shrink under the angry menaces of an offended God, so that they make shipwreck of their consciences and salvation, like them, who cast overboard their treasures resolutely, but with pain and grief.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING this uneasiness in an evil way they still persist in it. *He went away grieved*, but he went away however, he did not alter his choice, nor did his grief, as far as appears, bring him back to Christ. A disobedient heart may be uneasy and fret, and yet be stubborn and obstinate, may grieve and yet resist, may still go on, tho' his way be hedged in with thorns, *he holds fast deceit and refuses to return*, Jer. viii. 5.

SOMETIMES perhaps he almost takes up a resolution to forsake his evil way, but goes not through with it : We are apt to think that surely this conviction and remorse will weary him, and force him for his quiet's sake to amend his ways and cry to God ; but alas, it often proves quite otherwise, and instead of that he endeavours to make his evil ways more easy by deceitful excuses to extenuate his crimes,

SERM. crimes, and flattering unreasonable hopes of

VIII.

God's mercy to lessen the punishment. In short the perplexed creature is torn and divided with inward tormenting conflict, but what the issue will be is uncertain; but too oft the case proves this, that the man's lusts are too strong for his conscience, and notwithstanding all his remorse and regret he goes on and dies in his sins. He is somewhat unwilling to lose eternal life, but more unwilling to cross his appetites and crucify his flesh, to want provision for its lusts, or to see himself at an under and in contempt in the world; and so the smaller aversion gives way to the greater: Conscience is left to torment, but sin and lust to reign, to make him more miserable in this world, but not to prevent his misery in another; conscience tells him he is like to perish, his wicked heart inclines him to run the venture: Godly sorrow indeed works repentance, but then it works amendment also; for

3. THAT uneasiness and grief, which does not reclaim the sinner, will not excuse him. Christ speaks of this man as hopeless, notwithstanding he went away sad, he pitied him as he did other sinners, but did not promise to save him. It may seem to be some

abatement

must be absolute and entire.

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SERM.
VIII.

abatement of a crime, that it is committed with reluctant unwillingness, as it argues the man not hardened in sin; but then on the other hand it carries an aggravation in it, as acting against the urgent remonstrances of an awaken'd mind; it is no very comfortable plea to say, my conscience was strong, but my lusts were stronger, my sins cost me dear, but nevertheless I was resolved to have them: God never says, If you do evil, do it not without grief, without violence to conscience, but do it not at all; because in our deliberate acts there is still more of willingness than unwillingness, and the prevailing choice is most considered.

IF there be any irregularities, any sudden disorders and follies in our thoughts and affections, which it is not in the power of a prevailing sanctified will wholly to prevent, we may count them for infirmities, which will find easy pardon from him, who knows our weak frame: But we extend this too far, if we call any deliberate sin an infirmity, when our consciences have debated, considered, and argued the point, and yet we resolve to do it; God accepts indeed a willing mind 2 Cor. viii. 12. but that is, when it is not in our power to

SERM.

VIII.

to do, as in the case of alms, but where it is, he will not accept it alone, because then it is not a willing mind without it be accompanied with suitable actions.

I doubt many hurt themselves in this point by a mistaken interpretation of such texts, as speak of the strife between the flesh and the spirit in Christians, *Gal. v. 17.* They are ready to interpret their reluctance and remorse of conscience, as the spiritual strife against the flesh, and so by this mark they may deem themselves good men still; but this is not the evidence of a good man, tho' it be a truth, that the spirit lusts against the flesh, (or his mind is enlighten'd by the spirit of God against his lower fleshly desires and passions,) but he is the true Christian, in whom the spirit prevails against the flesh, who is led by the spirit, and walks in the spirit, and brings forth the fruits of it; else whatever be the struggle, if he overcomes not but walks after the flesh, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God, ver. 21—25. *Rom. viii. 13, 14.*

As to *Rom. vii.* where indeed we find this complaint, *The evil which I hate, that do I,* ver. 15. it is rather the account of a carnal sinner under the law, in whose person those words are

must be absolute and entire.

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are spoke, for if this was St. Paul's case, then so are the words, ver. 14. *I am carnal sold under sin*, quite contrary to what he says, chap. viii. ver. 2. *That the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death*, and to the constant description of holiness throughout the scriptures.

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VIII.

FROM what has been said I shall only make these two inferences.

1. How unsafe then is it to think uneasiness and reluctance of mind under sin, either in the acting it or in after-reflexions, a mark of sincere piety? It is only a sign of not being a sinner of the first rate, it is no more than what they may feel, who turn their backs on Christ and his salvation, as here we see was the case in the text: Much less will mere grief and regret afterwards be sufficient; this comes later and behind the other, and yet how many are there, who take this for true repentance, which is a quite distinct thing, 2 Cor. vii. 10? And indeed in the case of an unreformed sinner it is no virtue, since it is only what he cannot help; it is not what he encourages, but endeavours to smother and divert, more than to pursue its natural dictates. Is this any great religion to regret and confess

sin.

SERM. **VIII.** fin, and not to forsake it? To tell God you are
sorry you have done evil, and at the same time
tell him in your hearts, that you intend to
do so again?

IT is indeed an hopeful step towards salvation to have your eyes opened and see your danger, to have your desires awakened under importunate cravings for eternal life, so as to resent the thoughts of a miscarriage with great grief and trouble: But yet this is not enough, to have good desires for heaven without a suitable preparation for it, to be under the conviction of guilt without being influenced thereby to amendment; for such conviction only is saving, which reclaims from every evil way, which determines the soul's prevailing consent to yield up all, and to entertain such ardent desires of salvation, as shall make us willing to renounce all without exception to obtain it.

2. **WHAT** then remains, but that of necessity we take part with conscience, and cease to do evil by giving up every sin, particularly that which so easily besets us. Here it becomes you to consider,

(1.) You will have little else but misery in this life, till you do it. What enjoyment could this man have in returning to his great possessions after this? What an uneasy life will you have

must be absolute and entire.

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have, continually torn and racked between conscience and evil desires? To suffer and struggle for an eternal crown is indeed worthy of a noble mind, but to endure all this for an eternal night of darkness and woe is downright madness.

(2.) IT is to no purpose to stand out, for it is you must yield, our Lord will not recede; indeed it is you only are unreasonable. Tho' you be troubled at your case, yet it will not avail, he will not accept your lamentations and sorrows instead of your compliance; if you will break off your sins, and forsake your lusts, you may be accepted, but you will never have other terms.

LET us then return back to him, from whom we went away grieved, accept his terms, and do his commandments, whatever desires, whatever temptations, whatever interests we cross; and he, who works both to will and to do, will help us to overcome, and loose our bonds, will both heal our backslidings and love us freely, and after we have suffered and struggled a while here, will make us perfect and give us eternal life, which is better, far better than our great possessions, or all the sensual triumphs and pleasures of sin for a season.

N

SERMON

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you. I have been thinking of you very much lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but I have managed to find some time to write to you.

S E R M O N IX.

*Diligence the likeliest way to
rise in the world*.*

PROV. xxii. 29.

*Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall
stand before kings.*

THO' the great concern of man is his eternal salvation in another world, yet this is not the only thing he is required to mind, but in subordination there- to the business of this frail life must be re- garded. Nature has appointed us a task as well as grace, only this must regulate that. For in the wise constitution of God our secular
N 2 employments

* Preached at *Dublin* May 1. 1700, before the Weavers company upon their anniversary day for chusing a Master.

SERM. employments and relations are adopted into

IX. the number of religious services ; so that in the
 right discharge of them we are not only prudent for ourselves, but are likewise obedient to God : And there is much more of religion lies in the regular discharge of our secular business, than I doubt most men are aware of ; a considerable diligence is, you see, represented with great commendation in the text ; *Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings.*

IT were in vain to inquire after the connexion of the words, they being one of *Solomon's* single aphorisms, wherein he recommends to us diligence in our worldly employments.

1. HE propounds such an industrious man as one remarkable. *Seest thou a man diligent in his business ?* As if he had said, observe, behold him, as one well worthy of your notice, and who cannot easily be overlooked, he has something so excellent in him.

2. HE prognosticates such an one to be a rising man, fit for preferment, which will not fail of being either the natural or moral reward of his industry.

to rise in the world.

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THE words afford us this observation, *That industrious diligence in our proper temporal concerns is very good and commendable.* SERM.
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FROM hence I observe,

I. THAT some secular business or employment is proper for every man, for of such business the text evidently speaks, and supposes a proper share to each. The wise God made no men for ciphers; it is their own fault, if they render themselves so by neglecting the active powers he has given them. And tho' he has made religion the great and common business of all men, yet it is no debasement of human nature to concern itself in the inferior matters of this animal life, or such as relate to the present good of civil communities; for

I. GOD has placed men in such circumstances, that generally they cannot subsist without some particular calling. He has given us bodies of such a make as constantly to require food and raiment and many occasional conveniencies, no otherwise to be supplied than by the art and industry of men; else as we came naked into the world, we might always continue so; our food does not grow

N 3

with-

SERM. without industry, nor is our raiment natural

IX.

to us, as it is to the beasts, or that which clothes the lillies; the birds sow not, neither do they spin, but we have need of these things, *Mat. vi. 32.* God has laid up a treasure in nature, but men must dig for it, and improve it by art in the sweat of their brows; and he has so parcel'd out the useful conveniences of life, some in one country and some in another, on purpose to make men business by trade and commerce; and has annexed those duties to every relation, which will unavoidably find them sufficient employment. Tho' business be of various kinds, some more speculative and others more laborious, yet without the generality being concerned in secular affairs man either could not subsist at all, or in no more decorum than the wild beasts.

2. WITHOUT some such business man would be a burden to himself. Human nature in the gross and animal life is too frail to be wholly and only conversant with God and the immediate duties of worship. The higher we can attain to this, the more excellent it is, but to be wholly so is far above the abilities of this imperfect state. If for one
hour's

hour's watching with Christ he found the flesh too weak, how much less able is it to be always intent upon spiritual matters? It is indeed our infirmity, and often our sin, that we are not more intent; yet not wholly so, for we are not designed by God in this state of distance wholly for contemplation.

THOSE creatures, who are always beholding his face, are placed in greater nearness to his glorious presence, and in circumstances more advantageous than ours. This is plain since man in his first innocence was not so entirely called to a devotional life, but that he was to be employed in some manual labour, even in paradise *Gen. ii. 15*. Such who have pretended religion to consist in being retired from all worldly business, have generally only nourished fleshly pleasures, sloth, and ease, and instead of serving God better have justly incurred *Pharaoh's* censure of *Israel*, that they only sought idleness; as is too apparently the case of so many monasteries and nunneries. It is then necessary to prevent man's misery, that God has mercifully appointed him some temporal business, and has twisted that and religion together.

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II. I OBSERVE, that it is commendable to be industrious in managing this business, *Prov. xxvii. 23.* We should not be negligent and sluggish in our affairs, but active and diligent in them. For

I. IT is for the good of the community or public, which is advantaged by the diligence of its members. We are bound to seek the prosperity of the country wherein we live, and so we shall have peace in the peace thereof, *Jer. xxix. 5, 7.*

LET the kingdom be the better for you, and contribute to its improvement and prosperity, and be not useless burdens to it. It is by improvement in arts and much traffic, that a kingdom thrives, and this cannot be but by the laboriousness of the inhabitants, as may be seen by the prosperity of a small neighbouring country, which by the universal and incredible diligence of its inhabitants is become the chief masters of trade, while many rich popish countries, as *Spain* and *Italy*, are sunk into penury by reason that so many religious drones are harboured in their monasteries, and so many idle days observed.

THIS

THIS is so evident, that idleness among the *Athenians* subjected the offender to a prosecution at law, as an injury to the commonwealth, and they made inquiry of each man and woman, *quâ arte se alerent*. It is observable, the question which *Pharaoh* put to *Joseph's* brethren at their coming into *Egypt* Gen. xlvii. 3. *What is your occupation?* supposing no man to be without some occupation or other.

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2. IT is good for a man's own family, Religion furthers that instinct of nature, that we should provide for our children and those of our own house, 2 *Cor.* xii. 14. 1 *Tim.* v. 8. He, who has others dependent on him, is bound to be at pains and care, that he may be a benefactor to them. He, who in such circumstances is idle and prodigal, is barbarously cruel, and sucks the very blood of his off-spring, sacrificing the comfort of their whole life to his present ease and sloth; for tho' it be not our duty to study greatness for our posterity, yet we should endeavour to leave them in a capacity for usefulness, and out of the way of strong temptations and distress. The wife, the children, and servants reap many advantages, and fare the better for

SERM. for the master's diligence and care. See how

IX. *Solomon commends the virtuous woman's diligence this way, She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness, Prov. xxxi. 27.*

3. IT is very necessary for the relief of others. Every man ought to aspire after some capacity of being a benefactor; and tho' he have enough for himself and family, yet by the laws of Christianity he is bound to labour for the poor, according to the advice and example of St. Paul, who exhorts the *Ephesians to labour, working with their hands the thing which is good, that they might have to give to him that needeth, Ephes. iv. 28.* and to the same *Ephesians* he appeals for his own practice, *that his hands had minister'd to his necessities and to them that were with him, that he had shown them all things, how that labouring they ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts xxi. 34, 35.* This will be a double charity both in giving our own, and also in bestowing our pains to get it, so that tho' it may be but a few pence we can compass; yet whoever in such case gives it, shall meet

meet with the approbation of our lord and master, *Mark xii. 44.*

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4. IT is good upon a religious account.

(1.) As such diligence is very pleasing to God, when it is conscientiously performed. To mind our own business and to improve the circumstances, which providence has placed us in, is itself a part of religion, so that a Christian may as comfortably be surprized by death at the plough or the loom, as on his knees; in his shop, as in the temple. This is especially true of those, who are under particular ties to diligence, as is the case of servants to others, whose diligent fidelity shall be rewarded by the great judge, as service to the Lord, *Col. iii. 23.* while laziness and slothful negligence is such a crime, as will be interpreted no less than the not fearing of God.

(2.) As it prevents the dreadful snares of idleness, which are so fatal to religion: It was the sin of *Sodom*, and a great one too, so says the prophet *Ezekiel chap. xvi. ver. 49. Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.* Idle persons are generally disorderly,

SERM. derly, *There are some*, says the apostle, *who*
 IX. *walk among you disorderly, working not at all,*
but are busy bodies, 2 *Theff. iii. 11.* Such
 are not only useless but troublesome, exposed
 to all wicked companies, and sensual games,
 to impertinent curiosities and factions. It is
 the nurse of lust and wickedness, yet into this
 they must sink, who have nothing to do, or
 do not mind their business; they will wander
 into evil, who do not abide with God in some
 honest calling, 1 *Cor. vii. 20.* It is as profitable
 for the soul, as it is healthful for the body,
 for it prevents maladies in both.

UPON these considerations it is no wonder
 the scripture should so strongly urge diligence;
 thus the apostle charges the *Theffalonians*,
That they study to be quiet, to do their own
business, and to work with their own hands, as
he had commanded them. 1 *Theff. iv. 11.* and
 in his instructions to *Titus*, he wills him to
 affirm constantly, *that they who believe in*
God, should be careful to maintain good works,
καλῶν ἔργων ποιεῖσας *Tit. iii. 8.* Some
 think, that the word *ποιεῖσας* imports they
 should be leading workmen, or artists at their
 trade; so in ver. 14. (where the same expres-
 sion is used) *Let ours also learn to maintain*
good

good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful, is understood to denote the following some honest trade.

I may the more safely urge this diligence in an useful calling, as yours is, than in some others. Some trades are so trifling and vain, so insignificant and foolish, that a wise man would not chuse to spend his time in that, which contributes so little to the common good ; but such employments, as concern the support of life, *i. e.* food or raiment, are the most useful and necessary of all manual trades; and when a man knows he both relieves himself, and benefits others, with so much greater satisfaction and safety he may be diligent in such a calling.

I proceed now to consider the encouragement mentioned in the text,

I. SUCH are likely to prosper and rise in the world, whereas the contrary will be the case of the slothful and idle. *He becometh poor, that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich, Prov. x. 4. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, but the slothful shall be under tribute, Prov. xii. 24.* To thrive is the natural tendency of pains and labour.

SERM. labour. He that seeks will find, while the
 IX. other loseth and wasteth his substance. He
 that is slothful in his work, is brother to
 him that is a great waster, *Prov. xviii. 9.*
 And again, *Prov. xxiv. 30—34.* I went by
 the field of the slothful and by the vine-
 yard of the man void of understanding, and
 lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and
 nettles had covered the face thereof, and the
 stone wall thereof was broken down: So shall
 thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and
 thy want as an armed man. Diligence is a
 quality so useful, as may justly recommend to
 the most honourable offices of trust; all will
 be ready to covet such an one for their servant.

As this is the natural, so is it likewise the
 moral effect, as may be seen by comparing
 these with chap. x. ver, 22. *The blessing of the
 Lord it maketh rich*; which implies that God
 is ready to bless such abundantly, that as they
 have sown, so likewise they should reap: He
 multiplies talents to the laborious, *For unto
 every one that hath shall be given, and he shall
 have abundance; but from him that hath not
 shall be taken away, even that which he hath,*
Mat. xxv. 29.

2. IT is intimated, that this is an ho-
 nourable way of rising; more noble than to
 be

be enriched by some free undeserved donation. So that however some foolish people may be apt to look upon such with an air of contempt, as rising from little; yet if it have been in a fair just and ingenuous way, without sordid means or unwarrantable methods, there seems not a more creditable advancement in the world, provided it be borne humbly and decently. We praise the lands, which yield great increase, and the trees, which bear plenty of fruit; why then should not the community esteem them as the best members, who produce and improve most to the common stock? But I must not leave this without a caution or two, which if observed, I know no harm but good in your great diligence.

FIRST, Withhold not from God what is due to him, *Deut. viii. 10—18. When thou hast eaten and art full, thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he, that giveth thee power to get wealth.* Let not your particular callings interfere with your general one as Christians; this is always to be first prefer'd. It is very ill when men are so intent upon their worldly gains, as to neglect God and religion, or treat it slothfully, so as to hinder secret and family worship. It will be
but

SERM. but a poor excuse, when God shall challenge
 IX. you for living in estrangement from him, to
 say you were busy in your trade. Oh sirs! will any of you have the face to say it at last for an excuse, or will your conscience accept it as one, that you had not leisure to be saved, that you had not time to mind your salvation?

AGAIN, give the poor their due, according to the apostle's exhortation, *Let every one lay by him in store, as God has prospered him.* 1 Cor. xvi. 2. that they may share in your success, and praise God together with you, that so it may appear all your pains were not with carnal views and selfish designs.

AGAIN, see that your aims be good and holy. It is base not only *for a minister* to make worldly lucre the principal aim of his function, but *in any other calling* it is the same corruption to prostitute our lives and strength to such a mean ultimate end, as merely to be rich and full. Let therefore all your diligence be with this view, for your better serving and honouring God, your doing good to others, and for the public benefit, as well as your own. Remember time is short, and death and judgment near at hand, that you have better meat to labour

labour for, that you have greater business to mind, and more important accounts to make up; Remember, that you belong to another body and family, namely, that of the household of faith. Let your conversation therefore be in heaven, and your affections on things above, and your trade and business be sanctified by prayers and integrity; as those who are willing to quit all their employment and gain at God's sudden call in hopes of a treasure incorruptible in that heavenly paradise, where no curse shall enter, and where we may feast without the sweat of our brows. Shall we be diligent servants to the world, and not more so for God? Happy the diligent man, who is so in his religious business, who shall stand at last, not before earthly kings, but before the great king of kings in glory, as the angels now do.

AGAIN, let no earnest solicitude for gain abate a spirit of love and union among you. I know nothing is more common than envy at others success in the same occupation, since *Abram's* and *Lot's* herdsmen could not forbear strife. Many occasions will probably be administered, but as you are a corporate united body, this would be unseemly on that

SERM. account, as well as on the score of Christianity.

IX.

Unity is the beauty of every brother-hood, and the most obvious measure of its prosperity; for if there be any advantage in being thus associated in one body, (as it is to be supposed there is, else why do men unite into companies?) dissension disappoints all, and when envy, jealousy, and revenge begin to influence counsels, and intermix therewith, there is no longer either interest or comfort in such a divided body. Who therefore is there of any public spirit, that would not suffer some loss and damage to purchase unity and peace?

FROM what has been said I shall only make two or three inferences.

I. LET this teach us to hate idleness, *i. e.* the doing nothing at all, or the not doing it in a manner proportioned to our abilities and opportunities. The wise man with contempt refers such to the provident ant, *Go to the ant thou sluggard*, Prov. vi. 6. Ah wretched creature, whose reason serves thee not to so much purpose as the instinct of that little insect! Such persons ought to be loathsome to society, who are as mere drones in it; they should according to the Apostle's advice be shunned,

shunned, and put to shame 2 *Theff.* iii. 14. SERM.
 They deserve to be used, as *Philip* of *Macedon* did by two useless subjects, he made
 one to run out of the country, and the other to
 drive him, and by that means got shut of
 them both: Tho' indeed it were to be wished,
 that some common vineyard or laboratory was
 provided, into which those might be sent,
 who stand idle in the market-place; and
 then if they should refuse to work, they
 would deservedly suffer.

2. LET this excite you to encourage diligence in others,

FIRST negatively, by frowning upon the idle, and choosing rather to employ the industrious. If you take your work from the idle and negligent, and give it to the diligent, you will therein imitate the wisdom and righteousness of the great Lord of all, who took the one talent from the slothful servant, and gave it to him, who had improved ten talents, *Mat.* xxv. 28.

SECONDLY, By allowing the diligent a suitable recompence for their pains, that they may be reasonable sharers in the profit. It is a great discouragement to industry, when after all the hard pains a man can take, his earnings

SERM. will scarcely subsist him in a tolerable man-

IX.

ner. To be liberal to such is an act of the greatest charity, because it both relieves them, and keeps them in an honest course, and tho' it may not be called charity by men, yet it will be the more highly esteemed so by God. *For the Lord will plead the cause of the poor, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them; Prov. xxii, 23.* and none have more poor to deal with than you have.

3. BE not then weary of well-doing in these matters. Many of you have been diligent very greatly of late years, and have found the temporal success of it, as well as the kingdom in general; and this should encourage you still to go on. It has been indeed to the envy of your neighbours, and has brought you under some very unwelcome restraints as to your trade in particular *, but you have reason to be thankful, that after all you have not been wholly without encouragement to your industry; and since it is a favourable blessing of providence attending diligence, which makes it prosperous, who knows what ways may yet be found to make the issue far better than is feared?

* This probably relates to some laws made at that time in England, prohibiting the exportation of their manufactures

to rise in the world.

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I will conclude all with the apostle's wish, **SERM.**
2 Cor. ix. 10. May the good God, that mini- **IX.**
streth seed to the sower both minister bread for
your food, and multiply the seed sown! May
he increase your diligence and success, and so
bless your industry, that you may never want
incouragement, but being enriched in every
thing may abound more and more!



O 3

SERMON

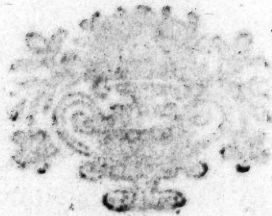
to rise in the world.

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24

IX.

I will conclude all with the apostle's wish,
Rom. ix. 12. May the good God, that main-
taineth the low and humble, prosper
your good and multiply the seed sown! May
he increase your diligence and fidelity, and so
bless your industry, that you may never want
encouragement, but being enriched in every
thing may abound more and more!



SERMON 3

S E R M O N X.

*The worship of God founded
on the principles of reason.*

ACTS xvii. 25.

*Neither is he worshipped with men's hands as
tho' he needed any thing, seeing he giveth
to all life, and breath, and all things.*

THE worship of the great God is the natural homage, which a reasonable creature pays to the supreme Being his Creator, his absolute Lord, his owner and benefactor, what reason clearly dictates, and revelation positively enjoins and earnestly inculcates; what is the daily employment of every good man in this life of temptation and misery, and the great business of the blessed in the regions of joy and triumph. Being a

SERM. matter so solemn and of so vast importance
 X. it concerns us to attend it with wisdom and
 caution, as well as with some serious attention, that we may not offer the sacrifice of fools instead of a reasonable service.

SINCE the direct design of worshipping God is to honour and exalt him the most we can, it ought to be performed with such suitable conceptions of him, on such principles and ends, and with such becoming thoughts, as may truly express a great esteem and veneration for him. It is therefore highly needful to guard against all such false conceptions of the object of our supreme adoration as tend any way to vilify or disparage him, lest, while we seem to reverence him with our bended knee, we dishonour him by our injurious thoughts, among which nothing can be more plainly so, than to conceive of him as benefitted or assisted by our service, as if we worshipped him for his advantage as well as our own, and as if indigence, instead of excellence, were the ground of our adoration to him; whereas it is quite the contrary, we come to an infinite being, the first, the greatest, and the best of all beings, who is above

above all want or need whatever, which is the Apostle's caution in the text. SERM.
X.

THE words are a part of one of the most important and remarkable discourses in the book of the *Acts*; in several others we find the Apostles reasoning with the *Jews* upon the principles of their own religion and law, in this St. *Paul* is arguing with the *Gentiles* upon the principles of reason and natural religion, and the testimony of their own writers. He was now encountering with two famous sects of their philosophers, the *Epicureans* and the *Stoics*, who brought him to the common hall of *Athens* or the public place of judicature, whither resorted the magistrates, philosophers, orators, and other eminent men, among whom St. *Paul* having liberty to speak, and being sorely grieved at their gross idolatry and absurd notions of the deity, he endeavours to reclaim them first to right notions of natural religion, as a preparative to Christianity, which is founded upon it and a noble improvement of it; in which matter as he acquitted himself with admirable wisdom in his forceable argument on the point, so it is worth reflecting on the great prudence and dexterity of his whole conduct, before he came

SERM. to the point of direct and proper Christia-
 X. nity.

HE had a long time burned with zeal ver. 16. but restrained himself, only disputing with the Jews and Profelytes, and occasionally in the market-place with such as he met, where some of the philosophers sects falling into argument with him, they led him away unto the public court, a place more convenient for hearing his new doctrine. Thus he had a fair occasion given him to reason with them, but yet he did not, when, his spirit was provoked within him, break out, as some, in fits of wild enthusiastic zeal, into acts of rage and violence, did not throw down their idols, or pollute their altars or temples, nor run about with outrageous reproaches and execrations, more apt to provoke than to convince, but waited a fair occasion, which, when it offered, we observe with what discretion and temper his zealous mind governed itself in his speech ver. 22. *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are as it were too superstitious* * : *Superstition* was a softer word than *idolatry*, and yet it is but comparatively exprest, not absolutely so, but *too much* given to the worship of Demons, and

to

* ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους.

to this is joined a softning word *is*, *as it were* SERM.
too superstitious: And tho' *Athens* was no- .X.
ted for idolatry ver. 16. having as many idols,
say some, as all *Greece* besides, and near as
great plenty of gods as men, yet see how
handsomely and modestly the Apostle intro-
duces his proof of that charge ver. 23. *As I*
passed by I found an altar, &c.

THEY could not here perceive any form-
ed design in *St. Paul* to subvert their religion,
that he came posselt with any prejudice a-
gainst their well-known gross idolatry before-
hand, or that he had been prying and making
inquiries, since he came, to furnish himself
with matter of accusation, but as if it were
an occasional accidental discovery, *As I pas-*
sed by I beheld, &c. I cast my eye on your
devotions, and observed an altar with this in-
scription, *To the unknown God*, and hence
slides naturally into a discourse concerning the
One God, who made the world, whose im-
mensity and spirituality, he asserts, and proves
from their own principles, and that therefore
their images could be no just representation
of him, who was the parent of men, more
noble beings than they. By this wise and
calm method, he neither exposed himself to
their

SERM. their rage, nor lost the opportunity of preaching the gospel with some success.

X.

THE words are liable to a double interpretation ; they are either, 1. A caution against that sort of worship *with men's hands* ; or 2. Against wrong views and conceptions in all worship of God whatever. The first sense amounts to this ; God is not to be worshipped with material worship, that is to say, with temples, or altars, or images, and sacrifices, or such gross corporeal furniture, as are prepared by human art or hands, lest it carry an unworthy reflexion on him as an indigent being, who needed such conveniencies. But this I do not take to be St. *Paul's* meaning, because the great God had required to be so worshipped in a temple with altars and sacrifices, the works of men's hands, without standing in need of them, and therefore it could not be said, that such worship was wholly disagreeable to him, or that it implied his want of an house to dwell in, or fat beasts for his sustenance, or servants for his guard ; and altho' this way of worship was laid aside under the Christian religion, yet it was not because it was altogether unworthy in itself. I therefore rather think the words were intended as

a caution in all our worship not to entertain any unworthy thoughts of God; as if he had said, This great being is to be worshipped by us, but let us not imagine, that it is for any want of his, or that he stands in need of it.

Two things are here to be treated of,

I. THAT we are not to worship the great God, as if or because he needs it.

II. THAT tho' he does not need it, yet still it is our duty to pay him this worship.

I. THE great God must not be conceived of by us as standing in need of our worship. This is not an impertinent caution considering the ignorance of mankind in things of religion: The apostle thought it proper at *Athens*, for tho' the philosophers and wise-men among the Gentiles despised such mean thoughts of the deity, and had slight thoughts of their idols and sacrifices notwithstanding their joining in the common practice, yet the vulgar were ready to suppose their Gods wanted these accommodations of an habitation to dwell in, and sacrifices to refresh them, and perfumes to gratify them. And indeed it seems, as if some among the *Jews*, who served the true God

SERM. and had his law to enlighten them, were very
 X. nigh to the same foolish conceptions, as appears
 from God's rebuke *Psalms* l. 12, 13. *If I
 were hungry, I would not tell thee; Will I
 eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of
 goats?* And tho' it appears from ver. 14. that
 the more spiritual worship of thanksgiving
 and vows of obedience, (which is the case of
 gospel-worship,) are not so likely to favour
 such foolish conceits, yet we see it not im-
 possible for weak minds, if uninstructed, in
 another kind to imagine, that God needs our
 worship, the honour and applause of our
 praises, or needs to be informed of our wants,
 or to be awakened and roused by our sollici-
 tations, or benefitted by our obedience, and
 therefore the scriptures carefully guard a-
 gainst such mistakes, *Job xxxv. 6, 7. If thou
 sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy
 transgression be multiplied, what dost thou unto
 him?* We must not entertain such a thought
 in our approaches to God; and this appears,

1. FROM the absolute perfection of the
 supreme being, who is not capable of either
 benefit or hurt from any. If he needed any
 thing, especially what depends on the will of
 another, he were not absolutely perfect, be-
 cause

cause he, who wants, may become more complete than he is, and he, who may be so, is not such already; nay, he must be very poor, who lacks such things as we are able to give. Now absolute perfection is necessarily included in the just and rational notion of the Supreme Being, since he, who is the necessary unoriginate Being and the origin of all good, must needs be all-perfect, and to say we could conceive a better being is in effect to deny him; it therefore follows, that he needs not our service to supply any defect in his happiness; for tho' creatures are in some sense said to be perfect in their kind, and yet are not self-sufficient, but receive their fulness from God, this is because they are but comparatively not absolutely perfect, as he is, who has all goodness in himself, to which no real addition can be made. Natural light taught heathens to reason thus; hence *Seneca de beneficiis* l. 4. c. 3. speaking against giving with a prospect of requital says, By this rule the gods should give nothing, *Illis enim in omnia natura sua sufficit, plenosque præstat*, for their nature supplies them with a full sufficiency of all things.

2. FROM his being the author and giver of all things, so the text adds, See-
ing

SERM. *ing he giveth to all life, and breath, and*
 X. *all things, and again, In him we live, move,*
and have our beings. From his exuberant
 goodness it is we are and have whatever
 we enjoy ; if he were not therefore himself
 full, he would not thus overflow, nor is it
 likely, that he should be a needy receiver,
 who is to all and in all the common and libe-
 ral benefactor, who since he gives all, can re-
 ceive nothing but what he first gave, and as
 he gave it without any diminution, so it can-
 not be returned to him with any advantage :
 He can no more need it, than the bright and
 glorious Sun needs the reflexion of its own
 beams, or that of the moon's borrowed light ;
 for God is the father of lights, from whom
 cometh down every good and perfect gift,
 I may add,

3. FROM the nature of our worship,
 which can signify nothing to him. All cor-
 poreal oblations are low and mean and no-
 thing to him, who is a spirit, and whose is
 the earth and all the fulness thereof. Spi-
 ritual and rational service is always more excel-
 lent and pleasing to him, but what does it
 all amount to more than a slender token of
 our good-will, but to him insignificant ? In

our prayers we are professed beggars, in our hearing we are learners, in the one we are supplicants on our knees, in the other disciples at his feet, in both we are receivers. .

SERM
X.

PRAISE seems the most generous branch of worship, which aims at his honour, but what is it but the empty good wishes and opinion of despicable worms? Weak and silly mortals are tickled with commendation and flattering praise among their equals or rivals, but the great God has no rival nor emulation. What would we value the good opinion of a worm or a fly? much less are we to him, before whom all nations are as nothing *Isai.* xl. 17. What can we say to his advantage, who, when we have said all we can, fall vastly short of what is due to him? and are so straitned in our conceptions and words, that we rather diminish from his glory than add to it, which is far above our reach. *Nebem.* ix. 5. The Psalmist makes the challenge *Psal.* cvi. 2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?* which none can answer, tho' with the greatest genius and eloquence, no, nor with what is beyond it, the greatest devotion.

P

U P O N

SERM.

X.

UPON the whole, so far is the glorious object of our adoration and service from being better'd by our devotions, or being beholden to us for them, that we ought to deem it an act of great condescension, that he will at all regard or accept them, or even pardon the folly and defects which attend them, *Psal. cxiii. 6. Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, or that are on earth,* much more, if he will reward them with his blessings. Instead of such wondrings as in *Isai. lviii. 3. Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?* rather let us be in *David's* amazement *Psal. viii. 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?*

IF he give us leave to maintain this sort of intercourse with him, to take his name into our unclean lips, to lift up our eyes to his holy habitation, if he invite us to address him with the confidence of children towards a father, and will say, the prayer or praise of the upright is his delight, the reason is not, that he has received any thing he needed, but only what for other reasons he has required; which

leads me to the second point to be considered, **SERM.**
namely, **X.**

II. THAT still God is to be worshipped by us, tho' not for any such reason as if he needed it.

THE Apostle had no design to alienate mens minds from all worship of God, which is the absurd inference some have been prone to draw from the premisses, *viz.* That since the Supreme Being is above being affected with what we can say or do to him, since infinite wisdom needs not our information, nor infinite goodness our pressing solicitations, they see not what rational ground there can be for worshipping him, who is above all worship: But this is a very unjust way of arguing, and proceeds upon this absurd principle, that indigence and not excellence is the only true ground of offering worship to our superior; whereas worship being not a benefaction, but a reverential expression of our respect, the highest degree of it is proper for him, who least needs it, and is farthest above it, and may appear to be a reasonable service on many accounts.

SERM.

X.



THE gospel revelation, which has reduced the worship of God to greater simplicity and spirituality, has made huge claims to it. There we read, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and such worshippers the Father seeks,* John iv. 23. and that all good Christians are constituted *an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,* 1 Pet. ii. 5. But this is not supposed to be a rule to those, who argue upon the foot of reason only, and yet upon this foot the voice of nature and consent of nations have justified and required the worship of the deity, and, as *Jonah's* mariners, however diversified as to their object, yet every one calls upon their God.

THAT it may appear to be rational and good, let us consider the design and use of it.

I. IT is a just and becoming acknowledgment of our dependence on the Supreme Being, and of his super-eminent excellency and dominion.

THIS is the nature of worship to acknowledge respectfully the superiority of another. Now it cannot be denied, that this is due to Almighty God, who made us and is the great arbiter

arbiter of our present and future condition, and it is as becoming, as it is just, to give visible marks and signs of this. An ingenuous mind meeting with one of transcendent excellency, with whom it dares not pretend competition, is naturally prompted to stoop down in reverential acknowledgment, as naturally as we bow down under a great weight, and we have reason to think God is pleased with what is so seemly and righteous in itself, tho' it no otherwise affect him.

PARENTS are not unwise or rigorous in requiring some marks of respect, which they have no value at all for but as it is seemly for their children to give them, so the God of order requires us to do what is fitting and orderly, and therefore not in vain, altho' it should be otherwise of no signification; he demands his right for righteousness sake, tho' he wants it not. It is decent and right in us to bow down before the Lord our maker, to proclaim him our liberal benefactor, to whom we owe our innumerable benefits past, and on whose boundless power and goodness we depend for all to come, to recognize his sovereignty by laying ourselves and all our desires at his feet with humble resignation. For tho' we cannot hurt

P 3 him,

SERM. him, yet we may wrong him by our neglect,
 X. and may please him by what is right, tho
 we cannot benefit him by our most solemn
 homage.

2. THE worship of God is an excellent and powerful means of making us better, of purifying our minds, and reforming our lives.

OUR greatest motives to holiness and virtue are drawn from the nature and will of God, he is both the reason and the rule of holiness, *Be ye holy as I am holy*, and *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Therefore the deeper impressions we make of him upon our minds, the more serious and wise we are likely to be; and this the regular worship of him greatly assists us in, for it is the most immediate and close way of conversing with him. We then place our selves in his awful presence to commune with him, and to direct our thoughts, desires, and words, not transiently but with solemnity, to him, who is not far from every one of us.

CONTEMPLATION and consideration of God and of our selves are the usual way of becoming wise and good, and here they are, if ever, most likely to be fixt by recollecting our roving thoughts and wandering desires to come
 into

into a due attendance upon our Creator's praise. What good impressions must this naturally make upon us? Will not the remembrance of God's glorious majesty, whom we adore as our almighty maker and righteous judge, awake a reverential dread, and lay us in humble abasement at his feet in the sense of our many transgressions, and inspire us with holy resolutions to do better *Isai.* chap. vi? Can we make grateful acknowledgments of his many favours from day to day, and still pray with hope, that his compassionate goodness will pity, pardon, and bless us beyond what we can ask or think, and not feel some ingenuous sense of our obligations to him? Can we hear his laws and threatnings, and not feel our consciences concerned? Or bewail our sins, and not be convinced we ought to forsake them? In a word it is not easy to conceive it possible, that men should address themselves to such work, retire from the hurry and amusements of the world to solemn transactions between God and themselves in secret; or spend an hour or two in an assembly to speak or hear of God, of his laws, his promises and threatnings, of death and judgment, and an approaching eternity, with-

SERM. out some good effect, some good thoughts
 X. and resolutions, some fresh sense of God on
 their minds, some restraints on their evil incli-
 nations, or some good instruction receiv'd;
 all which tend to promote their reformation
 and amendment.

HOWEVER it certainly improves the piety
 and virtues of good men to be thus often ex-
 exercised, drawing near to the Supreme Being,
 beholding his glory in his temple, and getting
 into some nearer conjunction with the eternal
 fountain of light and life, of grace and glory.
 They feel their minds hereby raised, their
 thoughts heightned, their love inflamed with
 holy ardours, their good designs and resolu-
 tions strengthen'd, their hopes revived, and
 themselves ready to ascend towards heaven
 in the earnest aspirations of a devout spirit;
 and thus they renew their strength by wait-
 ing on the Lord; and by thus nourishing the
 principles of virtue, and keeping lively sen-
 timents of God in their minds are prepared
 for every good work in all the relations of life,
 and invite also the divine aids, which are more
 reasonably expected by such as seek them.
 And is not this a sufficient reason for wor-
 shipping

shipping God, even tho' there were no express command for it ?

SERM.
X.

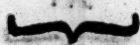
3. THE worship of God (especially public worship in united assemblies) greatly contributes to keep up the common reverence for God and his laws in the world, and so is a public benefit to mankind.

IF religion and conscience in men are of any use to the world by restraining their evil lusts and passions, and encouraging them to do well, if the sense and apprehension of an almighty and all-seeing God be that, which mostly keeps the world in awe, and is the chief support of justice, truth, and virtue among men, then is it most necessary, that we study to preserve and promote the highest reverential esteem of him amongst all. And which way can we do this, but by declaring our own humble sense of him as of a great and holy God, whom we fear and reverence as at an infinite distance above us? Which way can we express this our veneration for him, but by our words and actions? Our obedience conformable to his will is indeed often a more effectual and difficult proof of it, but yet it is more remote, and not so visible and direct as in the solemnities of worship.

To

SERM.

X.



To see a society of all ranks high and low assembling to bow down with seriousness and humility before God their maker, with eyes and hands lift up to heaven the habitation of his holiness, imploring with great importunity his favour as better than life, professing a submissive resignation to his sovereign will, and proclaiming his great and glorious name, his boundless excellencies, his marvellous works, and lofty praises ; to see him thus greatly feared in the assemblies of his saints, must needs shew him to be a great and mighty king, and will put others upon the inquiry, What means this peculiar unusual homage ? Have any earthly potentates with all their ambition obtained such marks of a general and serious esteem ? Oh, who is this king of glory ? the Lord of hosts. *Psal. xxiv. 10.*

How many would in a manner lose all sense of God, if there were no open worship of him, as several have done by an utter neglect thereof ? If the generality of the ignorant do not quite forget God, if there be any regard paid to his laws or honour, it has, I believe, been principally preserved by the solemnities of his worship ; and fearing God is the way to keep his commandments. There

is

is a sort of sympathy in minds, what we see others slight, we are apt to disregard, what they much honour, we respect; so it is here, when the spirit of devotion spreads over a society, one who comes in to behold, will it is likely be so moved as to fall down and worship, saying God is of a truth among them. *1 Cor. xiv. 25.*

SERM.
X.

FOR these reasons we worship God, and he has made it the means of commerce with heaven; and what is there in all this ridiculous or absurd for any to laugh or mock at? It is a way of honouring God peculiar to reasonable creatures, and is therefore a principal duty of morality.

INDEED under the gospel we have some ritual worship in Baptism and the Lord's-supper, but still it is the rational spiritual worship, which runs through the whole, it is prayer, praise, and holy vows are the substance of these, which are occasional and external signs to direct our minds, and to excite us to those parts of worship. If therefore worship in general be a reasonable thing, it cannot be unreasonable, that God should determine circumstances and manner as he pleases, not for their own value, so much as for their subserviency

SERM. servieney to more noble ends, which are intrinſically good.

X.

FROM what has been diſcourſed I would make the following inferences.

I. LET us keep up a due eſteem for the worſhip of God, for which I have endeavoured to lay the foundation in your underſtandings from the nature and reaſon of things, as well as from the command of God, which is juſt and good, that you may not preſume on a diſpenſation, as of a mere arbitrary injunction. Think not that it is needleſs for you, becauſe it is not needful to God. Remember the honour of the Almighty is concerned in it, and that you may ſlight and diſpleaſe him, tho' you cannot hurt him; and ſo it is in all other parts of religion, and as other ſins do hurt to men, ſo does the contempt of God's worſhip. Count it not an indifferent thing, but make conſcience of attending his worſhip, tho' there ſhould be worldly danger in it: thus did *Daniel* chap. vi. 10. he would not bear ſuch an affront to God as to neglect the worſhipping him; and the Apoſtle warns Chriſtians not to forbear the aſſembling themſelves together

together *Heb. x. 25.* Let us not seek occasions of excusing ourselves, but come with alacrity and forwardness, and be serious in it as in the most important business, not to divert ourselves or others, but to check them that are careless, as if it were only the amusement of a vacant hour, to comply with custom, or to hear some new notion. Let us by daily worship at home habituate our minds to this work, that we may preserve the spirit of devotion, and keep in the sacred fire on the altar, that it be not to kindle at the solemn time of sacrifice, else it will be hard to get an estranged mind into a devout frame. Let us not forget our Lord's directions to enter into our closets and pray, for which we have continual occasions. As an encouragement thereto, you will consider,

1. IT is the peculiar excellency of reasonable creatures. The rest of the creation cannot bear so noble a part to be active in their maker's praise, *Psal. cxlv. 10, 11.* they offer arguments indeed to us, but we are to improve them. Shall we do no more with all our noble powers than the dumb and inanimate creatures? Shall our peculiar glory our tongue be silent?

2. IT

SERM.

X.

2. IT is the appointed way of commerce and intercourse with God for the procuring his best blessings. God will give to men liberally, but in a becoming posture, he on a throne, and we on our knees. A sense of our dependance fits us both for receiving and using his mercies, and then he withholds no good thing, but he will have some acknowledgment paid to him as the great proprietor. Can we do less, or desire his favours at a cheaper rate?

3. IT is so suited to the nature and condition of men, that it affords a very grateful relish and refreshment to a virtuous mind. As it is the glory of God, that he is the deserving ultimate object of our supreme adoration and honour, blessing and praise, reverence, love, and confidence, so a good man accounts it his great comfort, that he has such a glorious amiable object to pay his homage to. He is glad he has such a powerful friend to hope in, and apply to in all his wants and miseries, such a liberal benefactor to praise and thank. Where there is a spirit of true devotion, the solemn transaction of worship will greatly raise and revive, inflame and warm the mind, but this is not to be illustrated

ted but by experience. See it in *David* SERM.
how strongly he was affected *Psal.* lxxxiv. X.
2, 10. *Psal.* xlii. 1—4. *Psal.* lxiii. 1. how
happy, when in the sanctuary praising God!
how vehement in his desires after it, as the
one thing he coveted! How does he be-
moan himself, when in forced absence, envy-
ing as it were the little birds that dwelt near
the altar! Sure there must be something in
all this. It is the best remedy of a burden'd
mind, since there we see a mighty, a wise,
and a good being, who can do all, and will
do what is best.

4. IT is a very proper preparative for the
work and society of a better world to come.
Heaven is a place of perfection in religion,
there all are assiduous worshippers, it is their
great employment to behold the face of their
heavenly father, and to give him praise in
harmonious concord; but this we shall never
be fit for, unless we be devout frequent wor-
shippers here, this will tune our spirits, and
will raise and refine us for that blessed state,
and there it will be a ravishing entertainment
to worship, not with lamentations and neces-
sary petitions, but with unmingled praises and
joyful gratitude, to proclaim the majesty and
goodness

SERM. goodness of that infinite being, to whom they
 X. are so nearly united : What are all our faint
 praises here to the joyful hallelujahs of them
 above ? Yet it is the design of all worship, of
 all religion, both in notion and practice, to
 prepare us for it ; for as God's glory is the
 last end of all, so all shall end in this, that he
 be eternally glorified and worshipped by his
 reasonable creation.

II. LET all our concern be so to worship
 God as may please him, and profit ourselves ; in
 doing which we should observe the following
 directions.

I. LET us worship him in spirit *John* iv.
 24. *Phil.* iii. 3. by which it is not meant to
 exclude all bodily worship ; true, it is not so
 abundantly such as under the Jewish dispen-
 sation, there were numerous carnal ordina-
 nces, that employed them ; but some bodily
 worship must be joined with spiritual, for the
 very nature of worship implies it *Psal.* xcv. 6.
Acts x. 25. *1 Chron.* xxix. 20. and the prac-
 tice shews it *Luke* xxiii. 41. *John* xvii. 1. be-
 sides, it is useful as it makes it visible, and aw-
 ful, and mutually edifying. When many join,
 there must be words, gestures, and signs ;
 there

there must be lips as well as thoughts, *Heb.* xiii. 15. *Col.* iii. 16. Some bodily signs are natural, for all serious earnest passions appear in the visage and other tokens; whatever indeed is affected is very improper, but so much as is natural is comely.

BUT worshipping in spirit imports,

(1.) ATTENTION of thought, not roving wandering fancies, *1 Cor.* vii. 35. *Psalms* lxxxvi. 11. All our thoughts must draw to one point, and not be incumbred with worldly cares; we should lay all these by, and turn out these guests, these buyers and sellers from the temple. The understanding must lead the way in a fixt contemplation of the divine majesty, deep reflexion on ourselves, and a serious consideration of the business we are about.

(2.) INTENTION or earnestness of affection. See *Psalms* ciii. 1. where the psalmist summons in all his powers, and excites them to his creator's praise, and calls upon all creatures to assist therein; thus we read of being *instant in prayer*, *Rom.* xii. 12. of being *fervent*, *Jam.* v. 16. *strong cries*, *Heb.* v. 7. not lazy formal cold devotions. Words are not wor-

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ship,

SERM. ship, prayer, or praise, but admiration, reverence, humility, love, &c. Eyes and hands lifted up are only outward signs of a soul aspiring towards heaven in holy elevations.

X.

NOTHING is more proper than a great and awful sense of the infinite majesty of God, since we come for that end to adore him by humble acknowledgements of his excellency and dominion, *Heb. xii. 28.* Tho' he condescends to commune with us, yet no praise, no humility is enough to be answerable to the object of our adoration. How loftily does the prophet express it, *Isai. xl. 17. Behold, the nations are as the drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance?* See how humble the celestial worshippers are, *Rev. iv.* they cast down their crowns, and fall prostrate before him: All our glory and marks of distinction are to be given up, when we remember the everlasting distinction between the creatures and the great creator.

2. WE must be careful to join to our worship purity of heart and life. Devotion is not designed to compound for immoralities, as with hypocrites and sinners. *Prov. vii. 14.* but contrariwise to nourish and increase our virtues,

virtues, *Psalms* xxiv. 4, 5. If we take the means for the end, we are much mistaken. SERM. X.

God abhors such base designs, *Isaiah* i. 11—

16. It is mere mockery and dishonouring the God we pretend to worship, when we make it a preface to villany for success in our crimes. *They make no conscience to do evil,* as some turn *Prov.* xxi. 7. Let us then with *David* say *Psalms* xxvi. 6. *I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord;* then it will answer the end, and be a means of making us better. Let us fear to do evil, to defile these hands and eyes, which are to be lift up to God in worship, these lips, which are to utter his praises. Methinks this should be a restraint on us, The hour of devotion is at hand, I am presently to address to the great and holy God, how shall I do this evil? How shall I stand on his holy hill? With what face can I pretend reverence and honour for him, and at the same time be breaking his law?

3. WE must join charity or a benevolent mind and behaviour towards men, void of all rancour, hatred, malice, envy, scorn, and every injurious unfriendly disposition, free from injustice, violence, fraud, deceit, and

SERM. the like, *Psalms* xv. 2, 3. *1 Tim.* ii. 8. A dis-

X.

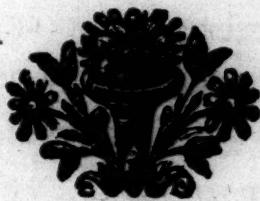
turbed mind is not fit for that holy employment, it grieves the spirit of God, which should assist our infirmities, a quiet serene frame becomes holy humble worshippers; besides, God will not own that we love *him*, unless we love our brother also. We should never forget the words of our blessed Saviour, *Mat.* v. 24. *First be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift:* so that at such times we should reflect particularly on our behaviour; and thus worship will edify and purge us from our mutual miscarriages. This advice serves for all parts of worship, *1 Pet.* ii. 1. but is of excellent use in public joint worship, in that it is a powerful cement and bond of endearing love among the society, which worship the same God thro' the same mediator, *Psalms* lv. 14. For this reason our alms add value to our devotion, as they are the testimony of a benevolent mind, *Acts.* x. 2. compared with ver. 31. and are themselves a pleasing sacrifice, *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16.

4. WE must offer up all our worship in the name of our one mediator the Lord Jesus Christ, both our prayers *John* xvi. 23. and
our

our praises, *Heb. xiii. 15.* and also our thank-
givings and songs, *Col. iii. 17.*

SERM.
X.

It is an humbling mark of our unworthiness, that sets us at a distance so far from God. God will not refuse to hear us, but then it is by one more worthy, who never offended him. It is a strengthening of our confidence to be assisted by such an intercessor. The world had sensible experience of his tender compassion on all occasions; the consideration of this emboldens us, when the majesty of the almighty, holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts is ready to overwhelm us, *Heb. iv. 15, 16.* As Christ refuses none, who come *to him*, *John vi. 44.* so God refuses none, who come *by him*, *Heb. vii. 25.* It is his office, and him God heareth alway. Through him therefore let us have access by one spirit to the Father, *Eph. ii. 18.*



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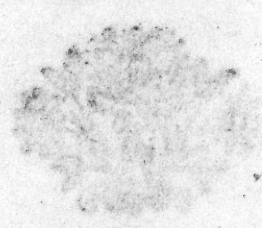
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SERMON XI.

*The nature, end, and design
of the Lord's supper.*

I COR. xi. 25.

This do in remembrance of me.

FORASMUCH as we are soon to celebrate the memorials of our Lord Jesus's death at his holy table, I judge it proper from these words to discourse something of the nature of this institution.

THE early corruption and indecencies of some of the church of *Corinth* at these solemnities made it necessary for the Apostle to refer them to the original institution by our Lord himself, teaching us, that we are so far wrong as we deviate from his example and di-

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rection :

SERM. réction: And does not the superstition and
 XI. corruption of these after-days render it again
 necessary to have recourse to the same rule? There were schisms and uncharitable contentions at it then, so that the Apostle says of their carriage, *This is not to eat the Lord's supper* ver. 20. that is to say, not rightly, not answerable to the design of it, nor to the solemnity of the ordinance: And are there not as great and general occasions of animosity and faction about it now, by straitning the terms of Christian communion, and barring men for not yielding to the test of a particular party? Now this arises from mens forgetting the express and grand end of it, which is common to all, who love our Lord Jesus, and their assigning other ends than Christ intended by it, or at least minding more what are but the remote and accidental uses, than what is the main and express design of it. What that is we are told in the text, *Do this in remembrance of me.*

THE words contain,

I. THE matter of the institution, *This.*

II. THE authority, by which it is enjoined, *Do this.*

III. THE end of it, *In remembrance of me.*

I. THE

I. THE matter *This*, as if he had said, This same that we are now doing; take bread, break it and eat, take wine, pour it out and drink, giving thanks to God. This is all which St. *Paul* relates of the last supper; All other circumstances of persons, posture, time, and place he omits, and limits the injunction to the substantial part of it, which shews that Christ's meaning was not to tie us up to all the circumstances of his example, which were indifferent. It is not worth disputing, whether it must be done sitting, standing, or kneeling, whether with leavened or unleavened bread, so much controverted between the *Roman* and *Greek* churches, whether common bread or round cakes, whether in the morning or evening, on a full stomach or fasting, or the like. These are no more necessary to consult Christ's example about, than about the upper room, the number twelve, and them men only, and other immaterial circumstances of the first institution, which trivial minds may spend their ignorant zeal about. No, *Do this* is a command, that we meet and take these elements with holy benediction and thanks to God, with
the

SERM. the actions of eating and drinking to the end

XI. we may commemorate our blessed Lord and his death. All this whole act becomes our Lord's body and blood, that is, it figures and represents his death, not the bread and wine alone, but thus managed, broken and poured out.

II. THE injunction itself *Do this*, I command you, I require you, I desire you to do it ; but of this in the application.

III. THE end or design of the institution, *In remembrance of me*. This must rule and direct the action, this is the most worthy of our consideration. Here it may not be amiss to observe,

I. THAT the institution is a very plain obvious business, no dark mysterious matter, but set forth with all simplicity and easiness to be understood, bread broken to represent a broken wounded corpse, and wine poured out to represent the shedding of blood : True, it has the symbolical meaning of signs, but then this meaning is expressed clearly, and the signs are as natural as well can be, without any need of subtle expositions. So that I see no reason why the antient Christians should represent

present this supper as such a mystic business, and make such a secret of it to the catechumens; as if some mighty abstruse mysteries were wrapt up in it, as in some of the Pagan rites; and indeed it seems to have been so from an affectation to conform Christianity to their former Pagan notions and customs, for which they might retain some fondness here, as in other things: And no doubt but they, who could find or fancy they found so much mystery in such a plain simple fact, as the Lord's supper, could easily find or make a great number of mysteries in matter of speculation, tho' the plainest articles of faith.

2. CHRIST assigns but one end expressly. I know a great many ends of it are pretended, but they are either wholly groundless, or else very uncertain and far fetched.

SOME say, that the Lord's supper is a mutual covenant between Christ and Christians, but this is so no otherwise than as other acts of worship and religion, which imply our professed consent to the gospel and service of Christ on our part; and on God's part this ordinance is not a direct confirmation of the covenant, only a sign of the death of Christ, by which it was confirmed before.

OTHERS

SERM. OTHERS say that the sacrament exhibits

XI. and conveys grace and pardon, and therefore
 at the close of an ill-spent life the sinner hopes
 by it to have his pardon sealed to him in particular; but tho' the blood represented was shed for the remission of sins, yet it is never said, that the signs of it are given for that end, to do all that the death signified might do. It no more exhibits pardon, that I find, than reading the text here does, which declares in words, (as this ordinance does by signs,) that Christ died for the remission of sins, but that gives no man a pardon, only on repentance it assures him and others, that it may be obtained, whether at the time of receiving or at any other, but his pardon no more depends upon that than upon every other duty, which a penitent expecting pardon must attend to.

THE Papists suppose it to be a propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's true body for the sins of the living and the dead, when our Lord Jesus had not yet been offer'd, nor did pretend to offer himself at the time of this institution, and who the scriptures tell us did but once offer himself for ever. But there is no end of the devices of a mystical imagination, when

when once men set themselves to devise what pretty purposes and uses they can fancy a thing may serve to ; as if every good end, which a matter may be drawn unto, were the reason of its institution. This serves only to confound mens minds, and to draw them off from the particular express end of the duty, by leading them to such thoughts, which, however good in themselves, are yet common to other ordinary duties, and not the peculiar business of that, which is here especially to be attended to.

I. THE great and primary end of this institution is for the commemoration of the Lord Jesus Christ, principally in his crucifixion and death. Here is no other end expressly assigned by Christ or the Apostle but only this, and therefore it is a vain curiosity to imagine other ends and purposes. Men may make it to serve what purposes they please, but Christ's own interpretation and meaning of these symbolical rites is this, that it be in remembrance of him, and the Apostle's interpretation is the same, *viz.* that by it we shew forth or commemorate the Lord's death.

But

SERM. But what is implied in this remembrance of
 XI. Christ?

(1.) NEGATIVELY, not barely that we may have this occasion to call him to mind and to think of him, the author of our faith and religion, and what he has done and suffered for us: Tho' this must be one effect of it, yet it is not proper or peculiar to this institution. We ought frequently to be mindful of him as the great example of our daily walk, and our constant advocate with the father, and the sense of his love should have a perpetual influence on us to constrain us to live to him. Indeed this solemnity seriously attended to may be of good effect to ingrave the deeper impressions of him upon our minds, whom we may there contemplate with great advantage both for holiness and comfort, which may be highly promoted by looking unto Jesus the leader and finisher of our course: But surely this was not all that was intended, viz. that Christ might be in their memory and thoughts, who had seen him actually crucified before their eyes, and could never forget so memorable a fact. But

(2.) IT imports that an open declarative commemoration of Christ crucified be thereby made

made in the assemblies of Christians. It is one thing inwardly to remember and another openly to commemorate, and solemnly to exhibit a public memorial, by which we not only remember a fact, but avowedly and triumphantly proclaim our remembrance, and our desire to have that remembrance observed, upheld, and propagated.

THUS the Lord's supper is for a declaration of Christ's death; the elements and actions of breaking the bread and pouring out the wine upon this occasion do according to the nature of signs figuratively set forth, that Christ's body was torn and broken, wounded and slain, and his blood was shed; the declaration is made more express in the words, which relate the meaning of these signs; much the same way as in the passover *Exod. xii. 25—27.* the memorial was exhibited, and the meaning of it given. Now this way of commemorating a matter openly, by a feast, and in an assembly, has frequently obtained on other occasions for remembrance of the Donor or Founder of some common beneficial society, or the author of some signal deliverance; and is very useful for conveying down the memory of any eminent person; or notable event,

SERM. event, as a standing monument to future generations; and therefore,

XI.

(3.) I SUPPOSE Christ's meaning here was, Do this for preserving and transmitting a solemn memorial of me the crucified Saviour of the world from age to age. And thus the pass-over was a memorial throughout all ages; and this institution of the Lord's supper has been one of the most useful traditional conveyances of Christianity down to the later times; for before the scriptures of the new testament were written, and afterwards, before they became common, in the days when they had not our advantages of printing; before this, I say, it was a great means of publishing and conveying Christianity, for Christians to assemble and celebrate in this manner the public memorial of this important fact, the death of the crucified Jesus, as dying for their salvation, and to confirm the New-Testament or Gospel-Covenant.

HERE Christianity was epitomized and ratified, and so long as this memorial was kept up, so long the Christian religion could never be defaced; and this being handed down from one age to another became a standing evidence of that matter of fact, on which
Christianity

Christianity is founded, and is a sure token, that there was such a Messias or prophet, who came to instruct and save the world, since from the very time of his death this public monument has continued, and a church been founded upon it, who have always practised this recognition of it. So wisely did our Lord appoint it for a lasting remembrance or memorial of his dying love, that it might never be forgot.

FROM what has been said under this head, I shall make these two or three observations.

I. HENCE we learn, that the Lord's supper in its very nature and design must be judged to be a standing ordinance of perpetual use in the Christian church. It is so far from being intended for the first ages only, that quite contrary it seems especially designed for the use of the later; for at first there was less need of such a memorial, because less danger of his being at that time forgot by them, whose eyes had beheld the tragical fact, and seen him hang in agonies upon the ignominious cross; but lest in another generation, which had not seen it, or heard of it when done,

R

he

SERM. he should be forgotten, and the obligations to
 XI. him be unknown or doubtful in succeeding
 ages, he instituted this memorial: So that it
 is eminently intended for us, on whom the
 ends of the world are come, who by this
 traditional conveyance of him, as crucified in
 effigie, are helped mightily in this article of
 our Christian faith, *Christ crucified*, unto this
 day. The longer it is since the fact was trans-
 acted, the more need there is of this memo-
 rial, and indeed the apostle says, ver. 26.
It must be till his coming again, not in his
 spirit, for that was now accomplished; nor
 to destroy *Jerusalem*, for what was that to
 the church of *Corinth*? Is there not as much
 need of his being remembered now as former-
 ly? Or should it cease before it has done be-
 ing useful? Had the body of Christians laid
 by the use of this institution, as some have
 done, they had been injurious both to the
 memory of our Saviour, and to after-ages by
 effacing this honourable memorial of his
 death.

2. I observe, that in this ordinance Jesus
 Christ is supposed to be absent, which with
 the consideration of his being figured as dead
 effectually subverts the notions of Transub-
 stantiation

stantiation and Consubstantiation, which suppose him alive, and is nothing to the design of this ordinance; for how does that shew forth his death, which exhibits him alive? There is no manner of use for his real living body here, were it never so possible or easy to be true, tho' it is indeed impossible to conceive how it should be, and as hard to swallow the doctrine with our reason, as it were inhuman to swallow his real body with our throats: Nor can I see any good purpose answered by it, for if, cannibal like, they had eat him up after they had crucified him, what good had it done them?

3. FROM the nature and end of this institution we may infer the extensiveness of Christian communion. It is for such an end as all Christians may promote and are capable of, and therefore belongs not to any party, but to all Christians as such, and should be so administred, as may leave room for all, who will truly answer the end. What more can in reason be required? All restrictions and limitations upon such are a defeating the end of the ordinance.

SERM.

XI.

II. A SECOND end may be assigned of this ordinance, which is rather the good use it may serve for, than the principal reason why it was instituted, *viz.* as a badge of Christian communion or union: But this not being mentioned by the apostle in this place, where it was so proper for the cure of their animosities, I conclude it was not the great end of the institution, only what it may by consequence be improved to, as the apostle seems to argue in the tenth chapter of this epistle, ver. 17. that being the servants of one common Lord, for whom in common he died, and who are fed at his table, we should be one body, as *Israel* were one national church by all joining in the one public institution of the passover, *one*, I say, tho' eaten at their several houses. Just so, tho' Christian societies are separated in place, yet they are one body, and have truly but one table, and not any proper or divided inclosures; so that their eating together is a symbol and means of friendship and endearment.

BUT alas! how has this end been perverted? Instead hereof, the Lord's supper is generally become the great engine of division and schism throughout Christendom, it is
made

made the badge of every party, and an enclosure about every little faction: Here one says, I am of *Luther*, and there another, I am of *Calvin*, and a third, I am of *Rome*, and none must communicate without becoming of their sect, and owning it as a discriminating test and livery of their several clans, and must be inclosed in their narrow folds alone, disclaiming catholic communion with the rest, as if *here* only, or *there* only Christ was, by which means Christians are led to hate and censure each other, as not fit to be of the Christian flock, or to eat together in love at the same feast; whereas in truth we should give this cup of wine with the same charity, that Christ speaks of giving a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, or on that account only, not respecting so much their consent in other opinions as in this, that they believe in Christ Jesus, and are his willing obedient servants. The apostle's argument *Rom. xiv. 3. for God hath received him* should prevail here.

I THINK it a great usurpation in men to make this communion the bond of any particular church, or of a private covenant, which should be for our communion with Christ,

SERM. both their Lord and ours, and all his body or
 XI. members. To run into clans and sects, to
 pin men up in their narrow folds, when the
 good shepherd has provided large and common
 pasture for all his sheep, is injurious,
 first to our common Lord by narrowing and
 limiting what he has not inclosed ; for I pray,
 whose table is it ? Is it your own or your lit-
 tle party's table, or is it the Lord's table ? If
 the Lord's, who should dare to deny any of
 his servants their portion ? What steward
 should be so unjust as to thrust away any guest
 invited by his master and acceptable to him ?
 And then it is injurious to our fellow Chri-
 stians also, by denying them brotherly com-
 munion, as if they had no part in our com-
 mon Lord and the fruits of his death.

THUS it is men have abused both baptism
 and the Lord's supper, making one the en-
 trance into, and the other the entertainment
 of their little family instead of God's ; and
 have occasioned such debates and uncharita-
 ble animosities about the appropriation of these
 ordinances to their own particular sects, as if
 they baptized men with the waters of strife,
 and ate the bread of violence ; and while in a
 figure they break Christ's natural body, they
 without

without any do truly break and tear his mystical body into scraps and pieces, and as plainly deny the catholic church in their practice, as they put it into their creed. And is Christ indeed divided? Or are we not baptized into one body? Are we baptized into *Paul* or any particular Pastor? Are our sacraments oaths of fidelity to the leader of a little flock, or to the captain of our salvation?

ALAS! how is the christian church torn in pieces at this day to the scorn and derision of infidels, while a people, the badge of whose religion is mutual love, do little else but censure and wrangle, breathe out threatnings and slaughter, anathemas and mutual excommunications? Salvation and communion is annexed to a set of opinions or little modes, and on pretence of purity brotherly love is extinguish'd, which is one of the noblest instances of Christian holiness; and sacrifice, nay, a ceremony is preferr'd to mercy. The communion of saints is scarce to be found; it is not as saints, but as saints of such a mode, and not for the image of Christ, but for the stamp of a party, that men are received; and *a brother to be beloved* has as narrow a meaning among *Christians*, as ever it had among

SERM. the *Jews*, nay narrower, and the church more limited, than among the Donatists themselves.

XI.



And how should it be otherwise, when this very symbol of love and union is made the great bone of contention, and is set up as a military standard to gather party against party, or as a wall of partition between brethren?

FOR our part, be it known we disclaim this fatal practice, let no man be excluded our communion, who loves our Lord Jesus in sincerity, who owns him as Lord and Mediator, and is willing to learn and know his will, and obey accordingly: And yet we tie him not to our society but to Christ, nor will we exclude ourselves from the communion of any other such, who impose not their particular opinions upon us, and so make our hypocrisy necessary to their communion.

WHY can't all, who love our blessed Saviour, and are willing to honour him as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, join together in an honorary memorial of him, in which they are all agreed? agreed, I say, in the end and design of the institution, and therefore should agree in the practice, if the apostle's advice might be observed, *Nevertheless*

whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Phil. iii. 16. and the terms of communion made so wide, as to admit all sober Christians of whatever denomination; as wide as in those primitive times, when all that was required was to believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. *Acts viii. 37.* But alas! some seem to take great pride in monopolizing the divine favours, and are fond to be thought, at least by themselves, a chosen separate people from all other Christians.

I should now proceed to make some application of the foregoing discourse, by considering the injunction itself, *Do this*; but this I shall reserve to another occasion,



S E R M O N XII.

*The nature, end, and design
of the Lord's supper.*

I COR. xi. 25.

This do in remembrance of me.

IN a former discourse on these words I observed to you, they contained three things,
1. The matter of the institution, *This*,
2. The injunction, *Do this*. 3. The end of it, *In remembrance of me*. The first and third I have already dispatch'd, and the second I reserved to be considered by way of application; *This do in remembrance of me*. We ought therefore to be careful, both that we do it, and that we do it worthily.

I. L E T

SERM.
XII.

I. LET us do it. Let us account it a duty incumbent upon us to observe this solemn practice, as an established institution of Jesus Christ.

I HAVE shown from the nature and design of the institution, that it must be of standing and perpetual use amongst Christians, so that it was not a command peculiar to the disciples, or with respect to them only who were present, but a direction to them to propagate this practice among other Christians also, that it might spread with the gospel over all nations, and be transmitted down to succeeding generations to the world's end. Accordingly therefore we find the whole community of Christians in the Apostles days kept up this practice *Acts* chap. ii. ver. 42. chap. xx. ver. 7. and upon this account it was practised at *Corinth*, and the Apostle directs and enjoins them to eat of this bread and drink of this cup; and it is evident from the most antient writers, that this was the common practice of the churches instructed by the Apostles, and a very solemn part of their worship, when assembled together, of which *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* give a particular account, and *Pliny* takes notice of the practice in his letter to *Trajan* about

about sixty years after Christ's death: So that by the Apostles and such as they instructed it was taken for a standing ordinance among Christians, *Do this*. And if it was instituted for us by Christ Jesus, I presume none of you will dispute, that there lies great obligation upon us to practise it, for

(1.) THE Apostle to give it a just authority calls him *Lord*; *I received from the Lord Jesus*. He has a well-established dominion over his churches, to whom the Father has given all power, a name above every name, and has committed all judgment to him, that to him we should pay honour and obedience.

Does he then say *Do this*, or *Do that*, and shall we not do it, and be as much at his command, as the centurion's servant was at his master's? Had he bid us do some great thing, (as indeed he has also bid us take up the cross,) should we not do it? Much more ought we to do this small matter, when he bids us, *Take and eat in remembrance of me*. It has all the authority, which he, our Lord and Master, can give it. This will further appear if we consider,

(2.) THE time of its institution, which shews it to be of serious concernment to have
this

SERM. this practice observed. The Apostle takes
 XII. notice, that the very same night, in which
 our Saviour was betrayed, he instituted this solemnity, and not only instituted it, but by his own pattern shewed them how to perform it, thereby giving them at once both his command and example, and this at a very serious juncture, in an hour of extreme concern and mighty thoughtfulness, the approaches of death and the grave. To be sure no slender or mean matter could find place or regard in a mind so busied, and possessed with such weighty thoughts and cares, as his now was. Dying moments are precious with serious minds and are wisely husbanded, and none ever knew or was better disposed for a due improvement of those precious hours than he was, and yet even then, when he was bidding his disciples farewell, and was going to the Father, he leaves this injunction upon them, *Do this, &c.* and spends time in exemplifying it, that he might give more weight to the solemnity.

WE may therefore conclude he deemed it a very necessary business, and laid some considerable stress upon the observing so solemn an institution, and that he foresaw its great usefulness

usefulness in the Christian church, when at his going out of the world he leaves this charge with them ; for after this supper, there is nothing related of him in the history, but the great agonies, in which he was sorrowful even unto death, and in which he expired the next day. A thing so circumstanced, a dying request, a farewell charge, not only of our friend and benefactor, but our Lord and Master, must needs carry great force and weight along with it. But

3. IT is a ceremony or rite enjoined by him, who has abolished all other ceremonies and rites as vain ; We have therefore great reason to believe, that this serves for some special good use and purpose.

IT must always be remembered, that baptism and the Lord's supper are but rituals, or positive institutions of Christ, and are not natural essential branches, or inseparable from a good man, as the love of God and our neighbour, the worship of God, and the doing justice, mercy, and faithfulness : We ought therefore to lay more stress upon the substantial duties of holiness and virtue, than upon these external rites, which can never save us without the other, tho' it is very possible a
man

SERM. man may be a good and holy man, and con-

XI. frequently may be saved without these. These rites however are certainly very useful, since appointed by him, who put down all other as beggarly and burdensome elements, and had not ordained this, if it had not been very proper and expedient, I say, *this one of the Lord's supper*, for *Baptism* is but once to be administered, whereas this is of standing reiterated use all along, which is implied in the words, *As oft as ye do this*, thereby intimating, that it was to be done again and again. Now therefore, when this single rite is pitched upon for Christians practice, there is the more ground to suppose it contains in it something useful above the ordinary nature of common ceremonies.

LET us therefore charge ourselves with it as a duty, which either must be done, or we should be able to give a good account why it is not, or that it ceases to bind us, either from an impossibility of doing it at all, or of doing it without such corruption and guilt, as would make us transgressors of a more weighty matter of Christ's law.

II. LET us do it *worthily*. I mention this because the Apostle blames the *Corinthians* for doing it *unworthily*, and thereby incurring great danger, ver. 29. Here we must consider what this eating and drinking unworthily was, and what the danger incurred by so doing. But first let me premise this caution, that none make themselves uneasy with groundless and vain imaginations, as if, because they do not find some supernatural effects from the receiving this sacrament, they have not answered the end of it, but have received the same unworthily.

IF our Lord Jesus had left men uncertain of the great end of this institution, no wonder they should set their imaginations to work to guess it might be for this or that purpose; but when he has expressly told us it was to be in remembrance of his death, nay, and doubled it after the bread and after the cup, still assigning this end alone, it is strange men should fancy there can be any higher end in it, and look on this as one of the meanest purposes, thereby distracting their minds with uncertain variety, so that not finding the grace and pardon, which they expected should in a peculiar way be then conveyed to them, they are led

SERM. into sadness and very uncomfortable scruples,
 XII. as if they had acted unworthily, when yet
 they may have seriously answered the great
 end of the ordinance.

THE unworthy eating here meant must therefore be gathered from the faults the Apostle here taxes the *Corinthians* with, for it is not to be supposed, that, when he is re-proving them, he should not mention those faults, which were most reproveable. Now there are two faults especially mentioned.

(1.) THAT there were divisions among them, ver. 18. Altho' they met in one place, that uniformity did not hinder their schisms, so long as uncharitable affections and practices were among them.

THEY had their own suppers toget, which they brought with them, before they ate the Lord's supper, as Christ instituted this ordinance after he had supped. Now in eating thereof they ate not in common but in parties, the rich had plenty, others but scanty fare, and they tarried not one for another, but each fell to eat their own portion; and thus they expressed but little of that common love and unity, which ought to be among Christian brethren on such occasions, ver. 33.

Any

Any thing, which looked like a violation of brotherly love, the Apostle was jealous of, and he is an unworthy communicant, who acts injuriously to that, who either eats his own supper, or makes the Lord's-supper an occasion of division, and to be so his own as to exclude and thereby shame his brother.

ALL such terms of separation and exclusion, which hinder true catholic communion, and limit it to a party or set of opinions, make that church not to eat the Lord's-supper, but every one their own: And he receives very unworthily, whose heart is alienated from or despises the communion of other serious Christians, who think not just as he thinks; and God knows how many pretenders there be to great strictness in their preparation and caution in admitting only worthy members, who yet are on this account very unworthy communicants, who in all their preparations have not cast out the leaven of malice and pride, nor among their marks of grace have so much as the badge of Christians in brotherly love to a disciple as a disciple, who instead of tarrying for their brethren, that come behind them, stop them from coming and shut them out. These are the worst rails about the altar, viz.

SERM. the limiting terms, which bar any sincere
 XII. brother from communion at the table of their
 common Lord.

(2.) THEIR second fault was, that they *differenced* not the Lord's body, for so it is to be render'd. They discriminated not this supper, which is the memorial of Christ's body, nor duly distinguished it from their common meals: And that, which tended to this, might be their mixing the Lord's-supper with their own, which made it look like an ordinary meal; for I don't think from ver. 21. that they were drunken at this feast, as our translation insinuates, this is too gross to suppose, only they behaved at it, as if it were merely to satisfy their hunger and thirst, not minding the religious purposes as they ought, and therefore the Apostle seems to discountenance that custom, and bids them to eat at home for that purpose, ver. 22, and 34. and by relating Christ's institution shews them a quite different end of his supper, which was not to satiate their appetite, but to serve for a religious purpose in shewing forth the Lord's death, and therefore would require a serious suitable exercise of their minds at it; and in order to that, every communicant should first
 examine

examine himself, ver. 28. *q. d.* Let him reflect upon the end of the institution, and examine himself by this relation I have now given from the Lord himself, whether he receives it so as to answer the true design thereof. Let him consider what he is going about, and mind what he is doing, not running to it as an ordinary meal, but asking himself why he is to do this, and *so* let him eat, or after the manner prescribed, that it may appear to be a commemoration of Christ's death; with seriousness and solemnity. And this implies or requires these things:

I. OUR true faith in Jesus Christ, and a professed belief of his gospel. The death of Christ was the confirmation of his doctrine, by which he bore witness to the truth, and confirmed his law or covenant; so that when we honourably commemorate his death, it supposes our belief in him, that he was indeed the true Messiah and God's only begotten son, that his laws are sacred, his promises sure, and all his doctrines true, that a pardon of sin, life and immortality are to be obtained, and that there will be a future judgment and resurrection, as he has declared. We should not keep up the memorial of an impostor;

SERM. if we thought him such, we should then
 XII. let his name perish: But we solemnize his
 memorial to declare, that we really honour, love, and believe in him, as our Lord and Saviour, who was injuriously treated and reproached as a malefactor, and for the sake of truth and innocency with wicked hands was crucified and slain.

2. IT requires our heartiest love and affection to him, whose body was broken and blood shed for us, namely for the remission of our sins. His patient obedience, his humble submission to the will of God was a pleasing sacrifice, to which God had great regard, and on this account exalted him, as *St. Peter* says *Acts* v. 31. *to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.* It is this adds weight and value to his intercession as an advocate: He is our propitiation, by whom God is rendered propitious to a penitent sinner, so that he gave himself for us, even for the sins of the whole world. Can we then remember the tragical end of so great a benefactor without at the same time remembering his great love for us, and exciting ours to him? Should not his interest be dear to us? Should we not love to serve him,
 and

and long to be where he is to behold his glory? SERM.
XII.
Should we not say with the Apostle, 1 Cor.

xvi. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.* He, who can be an enemy to him after having seen the evidence he has given of his divine mission and love to men, deserves to suffer. Indeed there is something in the ceremony and outward signs joined with the tragical interpretation so mournful and moving, that it is much adapted to stir our bowels and raise our affections, which naturally disposes the mind to more easy exercises of rational love towards so endeared and once so afflicted a friend, and renders this institution more affecting as to sensible passions than any others, which are not so valuable, if they do not feed and augment a settled habitual love and obedience to Christ and his laws.

3. It requires great thankfulness. This is part of the institution to bless or give thanks. Our Lord gave thanks both over the bread and the cup at two distinct times. The apostle calls it the cup of blessing which we bless; hence it is called the *Eucharist*. Our Lord Jesus gave thanks and praise to his heavenly father, no doubt, not only for those

SERM. fruits of the earth, as the *Jews* used to do,

XII. but for his benefits to men by his gospel and

sufferings for it. In like manner we must draw nigh with thankful benediction, sensible of the divine grace to us, admiring his marvellous compassion and bounty, rejoicing in the pardon and hopes of the gospel: And tho' our Lord *Jesus* blessed God only, yet it is very meet for us to celebrate also the praises of our Redeemer, the means of our salvation, in such ingenuous and lofty strains, as those in the *Revelat.* v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

4. IT implies a professed obedience to him, as our Lord and Master. The doing this is an acknowledgment of his authority, and by the same reason we are bound to do all the rest of his commandments. As it implies our faith in him, so it ties us to obedience to him. Let us then remember him as our Lord, whom we resolve to serve in all manner of self-denial, even unto death; to whom we owe a life in return for his, and are not worthy to be his friends, unless we do whatever he commands us.

MOST

MOST other duties may be reduced hither, but these are more directly implied in it. And from hence we may learn, that it is not every flatness or distraction in our devotion, or the want of so many hours previous preparation is the unworthiness censured by the Apostle, but plain wickedness, or gross negligence: From these let us keep ourselves free, and then shall we communicate of his benefits, and his flesh be meat and nourishment to our souls to eternal life. To remember and believe in him will add mighty vigour to all the principles of holiness, and feast us with joy and gladness, when we are assured by him, that through his name pardon and eternal salvation are to be obtained.

BUT then consider the danger of doing this unworthily, for

1. SUCH are guilty of the body and blood of Christ ver. 27. not of breaking his body or shedding his blood, but guilty of a contempt and misuse thereof, *i. e.* of what is the sign and memorial of it; and it is a great indignity offer'd to the Lord Jesus to eat and drink in this solemnity without a suitable distinguishing decorum, and but just in the same manner as if at an ordinary meal. It
5 will

SERM. will argue, that we make little account of him,
 XII. if we are not serious and attentive, when he
 is thus set forth as crucified before us.

2. SUCH unworthy receivers eat and drink judgment to themselves ver. 29, 30. We render it *damnation*, but tho', as far as it may be a sinful contempt of Christ Jesus, it may, unless repented of, incur the same damnation as other wilful sins or gross negligence, yet it is plain the Apostle meant not that here, because he shews what judgments he intends ver. 30. namely, such punishments as sickness, diseases, and temporal death, and this was exemplified among themselves, but it was to prevent eternal condemnation.

UNBELIEF and disobedience, injustice, malice, covetousness, sensuality and the like will certainly exclude sinners from future happiness, and expose them to everlasting misery; but to the unbecoming miscarriage about this institution, (if contempt and wilful impiety be not the principle,) the Apostle only threatens temporal judgment, just as was formerly threaten'd to the neglect of the positive ceremonial institutions of the law of *Moses*; such were to be cut off from *Israel*.

As between ritual and moral precepts God makes a great difference, so does he between
 the

the disobedience to the one and to the other; for to want moral purity and righteousness in holy principles renders a man both an offender, and incapable of happiness; to fail in the other may make him guilty, but not vicious, if there be not a wicked cause of that omission. There is terror enough indeed to make us serious and careful in this matter, but not so great as belongs to immoral crimes, not so severe as that denounced against vicious practices, that they, who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God *1 Cor. vi. 9. Gal. v. 21.*

MEN should therefore be in greater terror for fear they act unjustly, or not love their neighbour, for fear they be worldly or uncharitable, slanderous or envious, than for fear of unworthily receiving the Lord's supper: But yet this also is to be feared and shun'd, and therefore examine your selves, be serious and solemn, as those who come with minds full of respect and true love to him, who loved us and died for us, who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God, even his father: To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

*Faith and patience the way to
inherit the promises.*

HEB. vi. 12.

*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them,
who through faith and patience inherit the
promises.*

SINCE there are none, who profess our holy Christian religion in this militant state of trial, but are ready highly to applaud the success and felicity of those, who have finished their course, and won the prize; Since we unanimously proclaim them happy, who have received the end of their faith, viz. the salvation of their souls, there cannot be a greater encouragment offer'd to our thoughts
unto

SERM. unto holy diligence in religion, than what the

XIII. happy issue of their pious conversation presents us with, nor can we make a better use

of your honourable respect for your glorified friends, who are gone before, and your high admiring esteem of their great happiness, than by persuading you to follow after them by treading in the same paths, in which they have found the way to eternal glory.

THE author of this epistle, after he had suggested terrible things of those, who should apostatize from their profession, encourages these persons to better hopes by professing his better opinion of them, as in a state of salvation; yet not so as to encourage the abatement of their religious industry in the least, but rather to whet and animate their active zeal in further progress, he urges them to persevere diligently, that they attain a *plero-phory* of hope, either a full assurance, or, as some interpret it, a fulfilling of their hope, *i. e.* by actual enjoyment, as others now do says the text, which contains an exhortation to the imitation of them, who are gone before; where we have,

I. THE persons to be followed or imitated, *viz. The inheritors of the heavenly promises:*

mises: This description includes a vast multitude, a great cloud of examples or witnesses, tho' it may more particularly refer to the patriarchs.

SERM.
XIII.

2. THE matter of that imitation. Not in all they did, since in many things they offended, but in their holy carriage, or what they did as pursuers of heaven, particularly *in their faith and patience*, by which especially they made their way to final happiness.

3. THE encouragement to this imitation from the good issue of their example: They took this course and they did well, they are now got to heaven, where all of us profess a desire to go. Who would but follow?

IN the prosecution therefore of these words I shall speak to these three general propositions.

I. THAT they, who after a course of piety in this world are gone hence, are now inheriting the promises.

II. THAT the way, by which they arrived at this inheritance, was by holy diligence, faith, and patience.

III. THAT this should greatly encourage us to follow them in the same steps.

I. THAT

SERM.

XIII.

I. THAT they, who after a course of piety in this world are gone hence, are now inheriting the promises. Here it will be proper to consider what is meant by the *promises*, and what by *inheriting* them.

By the *promises* no doubt is meant the promise of eternal life, for it is not reasonable to suppose he speaks of any other promises than what themselves were concerned in, and tho' he instances in the promise of God to *Abram*, that he would bless him, and shews his faith and patience in waiting for the accomplishment, yet the main part of that promise was spiritual and eternal happiness; indeed there was little else that he could be said to inherit, for he never saw his posterity numerous as the stars of heaven, nor his seed possessing the gates of their enemies, nor did he inherit the land of *Canaan*; no, the heavenly *Canaan* was the main thing he eyed, this was the promise he had in view, *Heb. xi. 16.* and he plainly tells us, that he meant those promises, which Christians were sharers in the hopes of, ver. 18. and which is the foundation of our heavenly hope.

By *inheriting* the promises is meant the actual possession of the good they contain.

Christians

Christians are now heirs of the promises in expectation, while they live in faith and patience ; but after that exercised they possess them, as those to whom the inheritance is now come, they have obtained the promises. They were once heirs of hope here, they viewed the promises at a distance, they were strangers on earth making towards their eternal home, the veil was between them ; but where are they now ? we see them not among the expectant heirs below, why, *They are gone to inherit the promises*, those exceeding precious promises, that were given to them. What to us are but promises, are to them performances, and so are no more properly promises, only that is the right, by which they hold them.

THEY have run their race, and fought their fight, and have now won the prize ; they have done their task, their day of labour is finished, and the evening is come, in which they have receiv'd their reward in part ; not their full reward indeed, nor the utmost accomplishment of the promises, there remains something still behind. Till the great day all is not fulfill'd to them, which God has spoken of ; even the promise to *Abram* is not quite accomplished, till he be raised

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from

SERM. from the dead, as Christ intimates *Luke xx.*

XIII. 37. It does not yet appear what they shall be, till that day 1 *John iii. 2.*

THE total accomplishment of gospel-promises and privileges shall be to all the saints of God together, some get to heaven before others, but they shall not without us be made perfect; the full inheritance shall be given to all at once at the great day, but in the mean time a great and glorious part of the promises is possessed by the saints in light, they are enter'd into the promised paradise, and enjoy the promised presence and company of the holy *Jesus* in a total deliverance from all painful positive evils; they are arrived at the blessed heavenly country, tho' they have not yet seen all the glories of that land, nor are raised to the highest dignity there; they are secured of all, and feel and see abundance, that fills them with joy and glory; instead of faith they have sight, and joyful triumph instead of patient enduring. This is the end of their faith and holiness, the salvation of their souls, thus it has fared with them, they have got over all hindrances and difficulties, and after all their disputes and doubts they are got into quiet undisturbed possession of heaven, so that if it be

be asked, where are your holy ancestors and SERM.
progenitors, since they live not here still? XIII.

it may be answered, they now inherit the promises. While we wait and hope, they have and enjoy, this indeed we do not see by sensible eyes, but this we are taught to believe; thus it is reported in the word of truth, and thus it must necessarily be according to the tenor of the gospel, which says, that they, who are faithful unto death, shall have a crown of life. They have not indeed escaped death, but that is become the way to their inheritance, we see them no more here, but they may be found in glory. I proceed to show,

II. THAT the way, by which they arrived at this inheritance, was by holy *diligence, faith, and patience*, not merely by having lived under the profession of religion or the promises of heaven, for many do so, who never inherit them after death, and seeing we must only expect to reach it in the same way, it is useful for our direction to consider how they steered their course for heaven. There are three things, which made up their character while here in this life.

T 2

I. IT

SERM. I. IT is implied, that they were *not sloth-*

XIII. *ful*, not sluggish, dull, and slow, as the word imports, chap. v. ver. 11. It is properly used of such as move with a slow dull pace, arguing a sluggish heaviness and indisposition for action. Such we must not be, if we would follow the saints above, because it is put in direct opposition thereto, *Be not slothful, but followers*; which is as much as to say, that if we be slothful, we are not imitators of them, for they were not sluggish in the work of God and their own salvation; they did not consult their fleshly ease, and indulge their carnal quiet, when they were seeking after heaven; they did not sit down with folded hands in careless idleness and negligence instead of working out their salvation; they did not slumber and sleep instead of furnishing their lamps; they did not count it enough to cease from doing evil and so doing nothing, as the Pharisee *Luke xviii. 11.* their religion was not meer lip-labour, or a lifeless cold form or dead image: Had this been their temper, they had never inherited the promises, their souls had starved, as the slothful man is ready to do in his body; No, they were diligent to the end, they made it their business

to serve their God and do his will, they were excited by an holy reverence and dread of him, by a fervent zeal and a serious sense of the important consequences before them; they could not rest inquiring what they must do to be saved, and which was the way to *Zion*, towards which they had set their faces; they fled as men in haste from the wrath to come, they sought *first* the kingdom of God; it was by *striving*, that they enter'd in at the strait gate, it was by holy *violence* offer'd, that they took heaven; they had a race set before them, and they run *vigorously*, pulling up the hands, which hung down, and strengthening the feeble knees; they were engaged in a warfare, and they did wrestle and watch, endured hardship and strove for the mastery, or they had never gained the prize.

INDEED they did many of them sometimes grow sluggish and cold, slumber and loiter, but it was not this, which helpt them to reach heaven, this retarded and hinder'd them, this hazarded their salvation and filled them with doubts and fears, but this did not habitually prevail, for then they had been lost, as the slothful unprofitable servant was; No, religion is so serious a business, and of so

SERM. large a compass, contains such multiplied
 XIII. universal practice, that runs through all re-
 lations and conditions, and is attended with
 so many hindrances and discouragements, that
 he can never do any thing in it to purpose,
 who does not bestir himself and work with
 vigour, while it is day. They were therefore
 such as gave all *diligence* to make their elec-
 tion firm and sure, or they had never had an
 abundant entrance into Christ's kingdom; the
 service of God had their care, their head and
 heart and hands, while they were minding
 the one thing needful, and pressing hard for
 the prize now obtained; and the more they
 were thus diligent, the more comfortable as-
 surance they had of the inheritance.

THEY lived in the exercise of *Faith* in
 particular, (diligence was a general thing
 running through all the parts of their reli-
 gion,) by the means and useful influence of
 this they have reached heaven before us. The
 heirs of heaven live much by faith, their
 whole course is greatly directed and influenced
 by it, I suppose the text speaks of faith in
 God's promises as the reward of his servants,
 the same, which influenced all those re-
 downed saints in the eleventh chapter. Now
 this

this is the true character of them, that go on SERM.
XIII.
successfully towards heaven, it is through }
faith.

(1.) THEY did *by faith* discern and apprehend the great things promised, they believed before they saw or inherited heaven, so *chap. xi. ver. 13.* they were such as discovered the things within the veil, *viz.* life and immortality. No man can serve God acceptably without this faith, *ver. 6.* he that sees not further than sense and time is never like to be happy beyond them, nor are we like to know more but by faith; it is *this* is the Christian's principle, by which he views that distant world; by *this* God's blessed saints were firmly persuaded of invisible realities; they set him, who is invisible, before their eyes, they had respect unto the recompence of reward, they did not talk of heaven and eternity, as a fable or uncertain tradition, but they stedfastly believed it under great conviction of the truth of it, and carried the sense of it about with them; they believed the unseen world in its importance as well as reality, and not only might they be said to believe it, as that denotes an habitual persuasion of it, but as it denotes the exercise of that principle.

SERM. (2.) THEY therefore exercised *that faith*

XIII. in frequent express regards to this inheritance.

It is one thing to believe the heavenly promised glory, and another to walk by faith and to live in the act of it. Many, if ask'd, can profess they believe an unseen world, who never have any believing thoughts or contemplations of it, faith does not do its office in presenting it to their minds; But those in the text were such as kept their eye upon the promises, they looked at the things not seen, they made them present to their minds, they embraced and conversed with them, they had respect to them, as *Moses*, and acted as within sight of heaven, and therefore many a time they turned their eyes thitherward.

(3.) THEY were by *faith* determined towards the invisible glory as their great choice and end, their faith made them with *Moses* chuse these promises before all the treasures of *Egypt*. True faith represents these matters in such a light, as draws the soul to a practical preference of them to all things. They were such as aim'd at *this*, desired and laboured for *this*: *This* made them victors over the world
 1 *John* v. 4. *this* made them count all here

as loss and dung, *this* made them profess to be strangers on earth, because faith made them earnest for heaven, in subordination to *this* they managed all their other affairs; sense and flesh did not dispose of their time or strength, or estate, but regard to heaven ruled them above all. They lived as persons bound in spirit and bent towards the *New Jerusalem* whatever it cost; without this faith they had neither apprehended nor seriously minded heaven, much less had they vigorously sought it, but by faith they were directed heavenward; by *that* they were animated and quicken'd in their holy pursuit of it, by *that* they found this attractive, that drew their hearts upward: *This* gave them courage against all difficulties, *this* was their guide to conduct them, and their leader to vanquish all enemies in the way to that good land of promise, so that much is owing to their faith in this matter; the heavenly glory was both the object and the end of it.

(4.) *THIS faith* was both their support and comfort under all their sorrows; they had many trials, but here was their cordial.
Psalms xxvii. 1 Pet. i. 8.

3. THERE

SERM. 3. THERE was another grace exercised
 XIII. this way, namely *Patience*, and that in several instances and respects :

(1.) THEY exercised *patience* in enduring the troubles they met with in their way to heaven. Many a fore trial they underwent, many a burden they bore, many a grief they felt, before they got to that quiet place where they now are ; they travel'd through the same wilderness and paths that we go in, and some of them through more grievous thorny paths; they had not only their share in the common griefs of this uncertain frail and mortal state, had sickness and pain, losses and disappointments to bear, but many sharp assaults of persecuting rage; some were tried with reproaches and mockings, some with the spoiling of their goods, some with imprisonment, and some with a violent death, some with one sort, some with another sort of fatal cruelty, as we find near the end of this epistle. Now all this put their patience to the trial how to bear them calmly and comfortably without murmuring against God, or using sinful shifts for ease, or losing all heart and spirit for service to God. With this patience they bore and endured all ; when perplexed, they were not in despair,

despair, they fainted not in the day of adversity, but stood their ground, and weather'd the storm. In like manner they exercised patience, as we must, in the inward conflict of crucifying all carnal affections, mortifying their dearest sins, denying themselves in cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye, and enduring much of this contradiction: They went through the valley of *Baca* unto the mount *Zion* above, when by patience only they could possess their own souls, while through much tribulation they entered into the kingdom of God.

(2.) *THEIR patience* was exercised in long continued service and labour. Constant diligence is an uneasiness to the flesh, and a frail mind not fortified with patience will easily tire *Rom. ii. 7.* Men impatient of labour and confinement cannot hold on, they are weary of well doing; even our active service is a warfare and strife, which few have the fortitude enough to maintain to the last; but they, who are gone to inherit the promises, gave diligence to the end, they fought out their fight, they quite finished their race, they were faithful to the death, or they had lost all. They, who are at rest above, held
on

SERM. ON to the last, they had patience to worship

XIII. God daily, and to walk conscientiously, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world for many years, the length of their course did not tire them; Tho' some of them enter'd early and bore the heat of the day in God's vineyard, yet they patiently continued in well-doing.

(3.) *THEIR patience* was tried by their long expectation of a delayed reward. Patience is as really exercised in the want of desired good, as under positive evils *Rom. viii. 25. Heb. x. 36.* Hope defer'd makes the heart sick, earnest desires are apt to raise impatience in the unsatisfied mind, especially when during the delay of the expected joy many sore evils press upon us to wish the hastening of that blessed day, which will both satisfy our desires, and heal our wounds.

THUS did these inheritors wait for the salvation of God, they thought it long to be forty years kept in the wilderness, yet patiently expecting, as *Joshua* and *Caleb*, they gave not up their hope or desires, they yielded not to unbelief, but as the husbandman, when he has sown the seed, and it lies buried under the clods, waits for the precious fruits

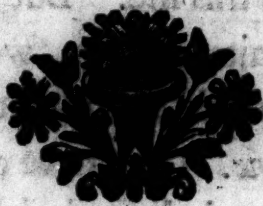
fruits of the earth in due season, so did they for heaven: They did not impatiently say, *I'll wait for my happiness no longer*, nor rashly turn to the choice of present pleasures and vanities, honours, or riches, as *Demas* loved this present world, which is the fruit of sinful impatience in hasty carnal wretches, who are all for present good: No, they were as servants *waiting* for their Lord's coming; sometimes indeed with *St. Paul* they wished mightily to depart, but upon consideration were content to wait and abide in the flesh *Phil. i. 24.* till at last they have obtained the inheritance.

If we would know what they were on earth, this was the course of their pilgrimage; when they were in our case upon trial, these were the principal qualities, that shone most eminently in their lives, and governed the stream of their actions and conversations. *Faith* in directing, *Patience* in enduring, and *Diligence* in executing, these three make up an holy saint in this life. But for our encouragement to imitate them, we may consider, that this is only **the hardship of the way**, and is not their case *now*. They have done with faith, and patience, and difficult labour, and now
reap

SERM.
XIII.

reap the sweet and easy fruit of them. Now, blessed souls, they are present in the heavenly paradise, their faith is turned into sight and enjoyment; it was their excellency in a world of unbelief, that they believed, now it is their excellency in the land of vision, that they believe not as then; they have now no burden to try their patience, which has had its perfect work: This was their case, when heirs in their minority, but now they are inheritors; now joy and gladness, love and praise take their turn to rule and prevail, God has adjudged the prize to be theirs, he has given them the possession, the day of glory has dawned upon them, and will shine more and more unto the perfect day.

I SHOULD now have proceeded to have consider'd in the third place, That this their happy success should greatly encourage us to follow them in the same steps, who have thus gone before: But this must be left to another opportunity.



SERMON

SERMON XIV.

*Faith and patience the way to
inherit the promises.*

HEB. vi. 12.

*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them,
who through faith and patience inherit the
promises.*

IN a former discourse on these words I proposed to speak to three general propositions.

I. **THAT** those, who after a course of piety are gone hence, are now inheriting the promises.

II. **THAT** the way, by which they arrived at this inheritance, was by holy diligence, faith and patience.

THESE

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THESE two I have already dispatched,
and proceed now to shew in the third place,

III. THAT this their happiness should greatly encourage us to follow them in the same steps, who have thus gone before.

AND here I shall consider,

I. WHAT this following them implies.

2. WHY we should thus follow them.

I. WHAT does the following them imply? The word denotes a following by imitation, rather than in order of time or going after them, tho' this also is implied, because he, who imitates another, must necessarily do it afterwards; it is such a following, as when one follows a copy or example. Now this imitation is both,

(1.) IN respect of the issue or happy end of them, whom they are directed to follow. We should desire and aim to be like them in their final blessedness, we should propose the same end to ourselves that they did, we should aspire after the same promised inheritance as they. Did they seek for glory and immortality as their resolved choice and peremptory end? so should we. Did they look at the things not seen, and make them their mark? Would
nothing

nothing less satisfy them than heaven and eternal glory? We ought to be inspired with the same noble ambition. Could nothing tempt them to set their hearts on earthly happiness, to take up on this side *Jordan*, or to be satisfied with having their good things in this life? Would they take nothing (no not such offers as *Satan* made to *Christ*, *Mat. iv.*) in lieu of heaven, not all the treasures of *Egypt*, any more than *Moses*? Did they refuse their own native country and earthly inheritance as not worth minding, and embrace the promises as their joy and treasure, *Heb. xi. 13, 15*? Let us be as far from making riches, or honour, or present carnal pleasures our chief aim, as they were. Let us chuse the same better part, and count all but loss and dung in comparison with having God for our God, that he may prepare for us an heavenly continuing city. We shall not imitate them unless we bend towards the same place and home, the same eternal inheritance and rest, that they aimed at and have gained to, unless we show the same concern to be as happy, and prosecute it with the same zeal and earnestness, the same value and esteem for it.

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(2.) IN respect to the way to this happiness; in this we are chiefly to imitate them. No doubt but we would all desire to be like them in their happy end, to escape hell and the wrath to come, and to inherit a great reward as they, we could wish it were as well with us, and all dangers were over as to our eternal state. *Balaam* could heartily wish to die the death of the righteous, *Esau* would fain have had the blessing, and we all covet to have the inheritance; but many love not the way, by which those that have gone before have attained it; they would be like them in the end, but not in the method they took. It is here therefore, that the text principally calls for our imitation of them, namely in their diligence, faith, and patience. Let the same mind, the same principles and gracious affections be in you as were in them, we must labour and seek for the same impressions of the spirit of God upon us, as were made upon them, to furnish us with the same active zeal, and the same resolute fortitude for enduring trials. We must practise the same lessons for self-denial and mortification, and be at the same expence for that pearl of inestimable price. The particulars, in
which

to inherit the promises.

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which we should follow them, shall be reserved for the application.

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2. WHY should we thus follow them? Because

(1.) WE have the same reason as they had for these holy exercises. Had they the encouraging promises of the inheritance before them to excite them? And have not we the same? nay, much more large and clear promises and revelations of it than those, whom the text seems to refer mostly to, namely the Patriarchs. Was that inheritance so well deserving of all their holy pursuits by labour and patience? And is it not so now? Could their faith apprehend it, and derive influence from the promises, and may not ours also stand us in the same stead? Have we more to divert or tempt us from heaven than they? Was not this earth as full of allurements, and as liberal in its baits to them as to us? Was not their self-denial as much as we are called to? Was faith, and patience, and holy diligence needful for them? and is it not as needful for us? And why should not the same reasons prevail as strongly on us as it did on them, who are gone before us?

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(2.) WE

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(2.) WE have somewhat more reason for it from their very example. This very consideration of their successful example carries in it many arguments. The example, especially of friends, has a strange power to draw and captivate beyond the force of an argument; it is therefore easier to follow than give an example in any great enterprize: And it is evident the author of this epistle here lays a great emphasis on this, that it is a following others; it sweetens heaven at the end, and holiness in the way, to think that we are not singular in either: But what force there is in this will be considered in the motives, that are proper for pressing this duty.

OF what has been said we may make the following application:

I. WE may hence gather matter of consolation concerning our deceased friends, who have finished such a course. They are gone to inherit, here they lived upon the promises, but now upon the performances: Think not, that they are lost or miscarried, because laid in the grave; indeed all their worldly contrivances, and hopes, and enjoyments are lost, which carnal men count a miserable

miserable undoing, but these were not their great concern or delight. Their main project was to enjoy God and heaven, and this design is accomplished by their departure hence: They are removed from their post here to high dignity and honour, to possess what they lived in the faith of, and what they laboured and waited for; and if when heirs of the promises they had such strong consolation by hope, how much better is it with them now that they are inheritors in enjoyment?

2. THIS affords great consolation to such of us, who are in the same way, for if this was the issue of their course, who were such as we, it shews what will be the end of our course also. Have their faith and patience led them to heaven? Whither else should ours lead us, but to the same place? It should be matter of great joy to us to think what has been the end of their faith, namely their eternal salvation; for then, since ours is the same faith, and the same exercise of patience, it will certainly have the same end. In their happiness we may see our own.

3. WE may hence learn, who it is are out of the way to heaven; for if this be the way,

SERM. that they got to that blessed place, then those,

XIV. who are of a contrary temper and behaviour, are not like to arrive there, because they want that influence, which should carry them on.

SUCH are all they, who are under prevailing *sloth* and cold indifference about holiness and heaven; and yet alas, how many such are there, who number themselves among the professors of religion! who are dull in practising, who love a cheap lazy religion, and would have heaven upon easy terms, who are for faith without works; they consult the ease and quiet of their flesh in their whole course, they are active and vigorous, sedulous and warm about the world or their pleasures, they pursue low designs at any rate, till they are tired and spent; but religion is a sort of careless imploy, that costs them no thoughts, puts them to no pains; they know not what it is to work in it with fear and trembling, with huge concern and restless fervor; their sleepy drowzy profession in a few formal customary exercises is far from a strife or warfare; they will not stir up themselves to lay hold on God, nor watch and strive in duty or against temptation. To
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do no hurt is the most of their task, to bury their talent is the highest instance of their faithfulness, not minding to fill up their relative capacities with suitable services, or their holy duties themselves with any spiritual and inward life; they are not in earnest for heaven, nor shew any dreadful sense of eternal ruin.

LET such trifling careless professors know, that none of them, who inherit, were admitted on such terms as these, none of these unprofitable servants are enter'd into the joy of their Lord, no, they are cast into outer darkness; these sleepy unvigilant virgins find the door of life shut against them. Sits, this is not the way to prosper, to be utterly sluggish in religion, often to intermit our work, always to do it slightly, and to be for putting it off from time to time; your *seeking* without *striving* to enter the strait gate will never carry it *Luke xiii. 24.* and really this is the most fatal way of professors miscarrying, as being least discerned, and deserves therefore to be seriously thought on by us all, that it may alarm us out of our wretched lukewarmness.

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ANOTHER sort of such, as are out of the way to heaven, are they who are strangers to the life of *faith* and the frequent exercises of it, who are wholly under the impressions of sense and time, these are the only things which fill their thoughts, which they are bent upon and solace themselves with; they have none of the faith, which presents and realizes to them things unseen, they look not at the things unseen, they converse not with them in believing thoughts, they retreat not to them for their consolation. Alas, these are quite out of the way to heaven, things of sense and time don't give those impressions, which fit a soul for the joys and work of heaven: No, it is through unbelief men perish, for want of this faith they are overcome of the world, because they don't apprehend the importance of another.

You, who can live without a frequent respect unto the recompence of reward, who can pretend to conflict in this spiritual warfare without the shield of faith or the use of it, don't think you can reach the inheritance, who are so little regardful of it.

ANOTHER sort of persons, who are out of the way to heaven, are such as are not fortified

tified with *patience*, who are too impatient of disturbance to bear any hardships for the sake of Christ or heaven, who are determined to spare themselves in case of sharp persecution, and cannot endure the thoughts of the cross of Christ, whom a little reproach or scorn makes to swerve from the strait path, and draws them into sinful shifts, who cannot bear the cutting off a right-hand sin, who have not patience to hold on in well-doing; their righteousness is as the morning cloud, it passeth away, they end in the flesh after good beginnings, their zeal is soon spent, they halt and waver instead of going forward in an even steady tenor. Such who must have present good and have not patience to stay for a distant reward, who have not patience to live by faith and hope, or to want the present gratifications of their desires, they can't endure a state of trial: These weak and feeble spirits, that can bear nothing, nor digest any inconveniencies, will never do any good. Religion is attended with so much self-denial, that it is not a profession fit for any but such, as are armed with resolute courage and patience.

SERM. 4. WE should from hence be exhorted to
 XIV. follow these persons in all parts of their character.

FIRST in their *Diligence*. Verily, Sirs, either the religious service of God, and the pursuit of eternal life is none of our business at all, or it is a most serious one, that should be heartily minded: Oh then that you would rouse up your selves to work out your salvation! Awake thou that sleepest, shake off that drowsiness, which so ill becomes an expectant of, and a contender for the eternal prize, give all diligence to make thy calling and election sure, strive hard, offer violence to take heaven by force and importunity, beware of giving way to intermissions of secret duties, of letting them degenerate into cold heartless formalities, or of delaying necessary work, which things are an indication of *slloth*. Don't burden yourselves with a load of worldly cares and distractions, which exhaust the spirits, and make you move heavily as under a weighty clog.

LET us quicken ourselves by considering the tremendous important consequences of the work we are engaged in, the short space of time in which alone we can work, and how many

many there are, who finally perish by negligence in the undertaking. Let us hear his voice, who bids us labour for unperishable meat, and to do with all our might what is meet to be done.

NEXT we should imitate them in their walking by *Faith* in the promises. Let us shut the eye of sense upon all visible things, and often open that of faith upon the glorious realities of eternity. With these objects let us seriously converse, let us embrace them, ponder them, and rejoice in them. It is a great injury to this spiritual life, that we make so little use of this fundamental principle of all practical religion, which derives its main life and vigour from another world, and is utterly hid from sense. It is only by believing meditations, that we draw down heaven into our hearts, or else ascend up to it. Let it be our daily exercise to behold the blessed land in this prospect, to see the promises afar off, to embrace and affectionately clasp about them, to evidence our interest in them, and thus to have our conversation in heaven. It is not enough, that we say we believe there is an heaven; there is much more than that in a life of faith; there are many

SERM. many acts of the mind under the influence
 XIV. of that faith, as we find in those believers
 { Heb. xi.

LASTLY we should after their example proceed heavenward with great *patience* and firm resolution, be so possess'd of the worthiness of the prize as not to be discouraged by any hardships. Let us expose all to shipwreck, so that we escape but with our souls, let neither persecution, nor famine, nor any other evil turn us off from our resolution, nor one thought be harboured of desisting from our service or warfare, resolving never to give out, but repeat and renew our endeavours. If the length of the service or the delay of the reward tempt you to faint, and to think religion a tedious employ, I beseech you remove that dangerous symptom by remembering how worthy the prize is of your patience and perseverance, and that it will abundantly compensate all delay, and yet, that it is but a little longer ere you'll reap. Beware above all, that you don't rashly prefer present offers of carnal delights, as *Esau* did, and which you will as surely repent at last as he did.

THIS is their *task*. Next let me press you to do it in conformity to them, *who are gone*

to inherit the promises. This is the *example* they set you, and this carries with it very cogent motives to work upon you.

I. THEIR great success encourages you to follow them, it is an happy example. Consider what is become of them who went in this way, they have fared well and repent i not; they are not preserved indeed from death, for there is no road, in which that will not meet us, but they are to be found in heaven, in their inheritance there, and it ought to be consider'd what it is they inherit, namely many exceeding great and precious promises, of a vast importance, which make in their accomplishment an inheritance incorruptible, that never fades. Who of us can conceive what they have gained, what they enjoy? They inherit all things, for God is their God *Rev. xxi. 7.* And who can have more encouragement to follow? Can we desire a better condition than theirs? Indeed had they miscarried, had their labour been in vain, their patience lost, this might discourage us to go after them, but they have obtained the end of their faith, and shall not we follow them, who have trackt out the way to heaven? Look up to them and take courage, behold them and become resolved to go after them, that
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SERM. so you may share in their joys: Would you

XIV. be inheritors? You cannot take another way, nor have greater encouragement to go in it.

2. You have the same opportunities and helps as they had, besides what has been said already of the same or better promises. You may have the same aids of divine grace as they had, the same helps to faith and patience, and this should surely have the same success, for it is not by any chance or uncertain accident, that one man succeeds, for want of which another may miscarry, as it is in common enterprizes; but there is one sure invariable rule of God's proceedings in bestowing the inheritance, so that where one succeeds, all shall surely do so, who take the same course.

3. It is here intimated, that this is the way to go to them, who have won the prize, and to dwell with them. They were excellent persons, whose examples we propose, and for that reason and perhaps also for other considerations, as our friends or acquaintance, they are desirable company to live with for ever. Oh, let our honourable esteem and affection for our departed friends be improved this way, that they may be as so many attractive

attractives to draw us towards heaven: Sure it should be the more desirable to think, that *there* many of our most valuable friends are, whom we should gladly and eagerly follow the same way, that we may meet at the same end, and be joint inheritors of the same promises. The author of this epistle seems to have this in his thoughts, *Heb. xiii. 7*, where he exhorts them to remember them, who had spoken to them the word of God, to follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation. There is no way to meet again with our holy friends but this. It may be some of you have pious parents or other relations, who have gone this way before you; Oh, how cheerfully should you follow, more especially them, whom you have known and loved! How should the hope of going after them make you to bestir yourselves, that where they are there you may be also?

4. CONSIDER the sad consequences of not following them. Then you shall not inherit the promises, nor share in their great happiness, which is the reward of diligence, faith, and patience; Nay, you shall never enjoy their society, for unless you be like them, you cannot live and converse together; no, if you follow

SERM.

XIV.

follow not them, you follow such as by sloth and unprofitableness, by unbelief and sensuality, or earthly-mindedness are sunk into endless despair, and have lost all, even hope itself. And how may some of you be upbraided by your pious parents or relations, who have set you the example in the text, Ah degenerate wretches, where is the resemblance of the pattern we set you? Where is that holy zeal and faith, which we hoped had been transmitted to our posterity? Where is the respect or love shown to us, when you have shunned the way, which might have brought us together for ever? Will you then, Sirs, inherit the estates of your ancestors, and not their virtues? Will you fill up their places in the world, but not in the church of God. *Phil. iv. 9*? Whereas by following the example of our holy friends, and making their conduct the pattern of our imitation, we may still maintain some communion with them, while they are thus in our view and remembrance, while we frequently contemplate what they *were*, and what they *are*, while we have their track before us, and are hoping to overtake them, and have it in our eye and thoughts to share interests and comforts again.

S E R M O N

SERMON XV.

*Christ entred into heaven as
our forerunner.*

HEB. vi. 20.

*Whither the forerunner is for us entred, even
Jesus made an high-priest for ever after
the order of Melchisedec.*

SINCE (as I have lately shewn) the author of this epistle in pressing these Christian *Hebrews* to perseverance and holy diligence in their Christian course makes use of this as an encouraging motive, viz. the successful example of holy persons, who had gone before and won the prize in the same way ver. 12. it is no wonder he should afterwards present them with a greater and

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more

SERM. more encouraging example of this kind in our

XV. Lord Jesus Christ, whose diligence faith and patience were more nobly exercised and tried than any others, and whose reward and success was accordingly much superior.

FOR tho' indeed in the examples of ordinary men we have this advantage, that we see religion practised and exemplified, and the glorious crown obtained by men of like frailties and passions with our selves ; yet on the other hand the entrance into heaven by our Lord Jesus carries in it more encouragement from the consideration of the relation, which he bears to us, and the dependance our felicity has upon his advancement.

THEY are in some sense forerunners too, but not in the same manner as he, they have led us the way, but do not give us such encouragement and assistance to follow.

THE author of this epistle having said much to shew the grounds of our Christian hope, and the consolation it affords from the oath and word of God, the experience of others, and the stability of the object within the veil, he concludes the whole with this further remark, that Jesus is entred into that state, which is the object of our present faith and

and hope, and this under a double character. SERM.

XV.

As it is *for us*, so it is as *a forerunner*, and *an high-priest* of the most excellent nature, and this is our great encouragement, the confirmation of our hope, and the attractive of our desires; from whence I observe, *That it is the great security and confirmation of a Christian's heavenly hope, that Christ Jesus is entred into heaven for them.* Where there are three things to be considered.

I. THE place into which he is entred.

II. THE design of his entrance, and the character he there bears.

III. THE influence this has to encourage our hopes and desires.

I. As to the place, it is within the veil, that is, he is entred into the invisible heavens, said to be within the veil in plain allusion to the veil of the *Jewish* temple, by which the most holy place was separated from the rest, which was not to be seen nor entred into, but on one day in the year by the high-priest only.

Now this was a very proper periphrasis, whereby to describe heaven to the *Jews*, who very well understood the matters alluded to

SERM. *Heb. ix. 3.* Indeed it is a proper representation
 XV. of heaven,

I. As it is to us an *unseen* place. A veil is intended for covering something from the sight; thus *Moses* put it on not only for that end before the tabernacle, but also for covering his face with it to hide it. So heaven is to us within the veil, there is a natural veil of clouds and intermediate regions between us and the seat of bliss, which the sharpest sight cannot penetrate through.

WE see nothing at present of that glorious place, they are to us the things unseen, and tho' we ought to walk in daily view of them, yet it is by faith and not by sight. They are probably too bright for mortal eyes to behold; it is light inaccessible; which like the face of *Moses* must be covered from us. Besides, God expects we should trust him for those good things; which no eye hath seen or can see; we would fain indeed pry into them and put by the veil, we guess and imagine, but it is a secret to us, it is a mysterious business, what we shall be and see, when got within the veil, when the covert shall be taken off, and that dazzling glory shall present itself naked to our view.

2. HEAVEN

2. HEAVEN is thereby properly represented as it is the *most holy* place, or place of separation answerable to the oracle in the temple, for so it is plainly called in chap. ix. ver. 12. of this epistle.

SOME of the *Jewish* allegorists say, that the sanctuary or the temple was intended for a resemblance of the world. The outward sanctuary signifies this lower world, the candlesticks and lamps represent the luminaries of the visible heavens, the twelve loaves the fruits of the earth, and the inward part or the most holy represents the highest heaven: This is all mere imagination, but yet it is certain this last is a suitable figure of heaven in some particulars, in allusion to which heaven is here described; for as that was most holy, so is heaven above, but few are clean enough to enter into it, and no others may. It is full of awful solemnity and the most deep expressions of high veneration: There is perpetual adoration, and the sweet incense of chearful praises, there especially our great high priest enters with his blood to intercede for us, with relation to whom it is here said to be within the veil, to introduce the discourse of Christ's priesthood: There is the mercy-seat, where

SERM. he presents the prayers of all his saints ; that is
 XV. the place, which is fill'd with the divine glory and presence ; there the cherubim dwell about his throne ; all is holy, the place, the work, the company is most holy ; they above are separated not only from the world, but even from the church imperfect below.

II. I COME now to consider the design of Christ's entrance thither. This is intimated

1. BY a general expreffion, *He is entred for us*, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, for our advantage, upon our account ; not in our stead, so as to prevent our entrance into heaven, this would be but little comfort to us ; but yet it is not merely for *us* that he is entred, so as that it should not be for *himself* also, for doubtless he is gone thither for his own sake to reap the expected reward of his faithful services ; it is for his own great interest and honour, for by it he has obtained a name above every name, and sits down on a triumphant throne ; he is now entred with great glory into his kingdom, and has obtained far more by it, than any of his servants shall.

BUT yet it is for *us* too, for he is entred in a double capacity, both his own personal one,

one, as he was the most holy useful faithful servant of God, to whom a liberal reward was due; and as he was our mediator also to act for us, and improve his own interest for advancing ours: Thus he died, thus he rose again, and thus he lives and reigns for us; he neither forgot us in the perplexities of his suffering state, nor is unmindful of us in the glorious greatness of his exaltation *Heb. ix. 24.*

2. BY the particular characters assigned to him there as entered for us, *a forerunner* and *an high-priest.*

(1.) HE is entered as *our forerunner*, or *πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, *forerunner for us*, as some are for pointing the words.

NOW this may be considered either as denoting only a priority in general, or one that is before others, as he who out-runs the rest in the race was so called, he that led way to the prize and out-stript others, and so the allusion to a race is plainly carried on, *Heb. xii. 1.* And verily Christ Jesus is *the* forerunner, others also are gone before, *viz.* those who have finished a pious course before us; but he is more eminently so, he has excelled all the saints in holiness and service, he has won the highest prize. He is the first, that has opened the

SERM. entrance into heaven by his own virtue for
 XV. others to follow in the way which he has
 consecrated, leaving them a blessed example
 to look unto and carry in their eye.

OR it may denote a sort of ministerial office, viz. that of an harbinger, such as great personages send to prepare their way, to take up quarters for them, and to give notice of their coming, that they may find all things ready. Thus *John* the Baptist was the forerunner to Christ, *Mat. iii.* and this in some measure seems here intended, in that he is said to be a forerunner *for us*, whereas in the former sense it was proper only *for himself*: For tho' he is not our forerunner in a subordinate sense, as that notes an office of inferiority, or one sent by us; yet as to the beneficial part of that office, he does discharge it as well as that of our advocate, and ministers for us as our high-priest in that court of heaven, whither he is sent and translated by God.

OR once more, it may denote such a forerunner as a general or captain is to the army he leads, *making* as well as *shewing* the way to them to follow and take possession, and thus he is styled *the captain* of our salvation, *Heb. ii. 10.*

SOME

SOME have carried the notion of Christ's being a forerunner further, and suppose him to be the first who entred at all into heaven, that the way was impassable till then, that the departed spirits of the antient saints were resting in some lower receptacle till Christ's entrance, who opened the new way to them, *Heb. x. 20. to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us*; thus it is more fully expressed, *Heb. ix. 8. That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, it being prefigured by the seclusion of all from the oracle but the high-priest: Thus Josephus interprets it, and so do many primitive Christian fathers.*

ACCORDINGLY as soon as Christ departed, the veil was rent in twain, the figure was now ended, and the way to the true Holy of holies was opened. Consonant to this some may expound that article of Christ's descent into hell or *Hades*, of going to those lower parts to exalt the spirits there into an higher station, tho' not to see the face of God or the full fruition of his glory, which is reserved till after the resurrection of their bodies:
and

SERM. and to this end might interpret *John* xiv. 2.
 XV. of Christ's going to prepare the way.

I JUST mention these opinions, leaving you to judge of them as you shall see reason. However my text says only, he is a forerunner *for us*, not *for them*; and tho' others, such as *Enoch* and *Elias*, may seem to have been before him and our forerunners too, yet they entred not *for us* as our harbingers, as he did.

AFTER all, without any more difficulties our Lord Jesus was the forerunner to all, both us and them, upon another account, as he was the first, that rose from the dead, and entred into heaven with body and spirit to do us service.

I SHOULD next proceed to consider him under his second character, that of *an high-priest*, but this I shall reserve to be the subject of another discourse, and shall now proceed to the third general, *viz.*

III. To shew, that this consideration of Christ's being our forerunner affords great encouragement to our faith in several respects.

I. As a forerunner in the first sense, *viz.* one who has led the way, it gives us the

encouragement of an happy example and instance of future rewards.

O U R hope is sometimes apt to be undermined by unbelief and distrust about the certainty of such a state in general, because we see it not : Now one real instance of this is a confutation to such unbelief, since Christ has by holiness made his way to heaven and pierced that veil, it follows that it is a way passable, and human nature is capable both in body and soul of a translation to that place, and a relishing participation of that felicity. As Christ's resurrection is a solid encouragement to believe our own with more facility, because we see in it a certain instance of the possibility of it, and the way which God designs to take with men, *1 Cor. xv. 12.* So his glorification after an holy life through much misery and labour may assure us, that the like shall be to others, who walk as he walked ; so that we may behold it with encouragement, as what raises our faith and hope to an high pitch of confidence, *Heb. xii. 2.*

2. IN the other sense as an harbinger it is yet more encouraging, because the very design of such is to signify, that they, whose fore-

SERM. forerunner he is, are shortly to follow : It is
 XV. a pledge of their coming soon, and esteemed
 a public token.

CHRIST Jesus were not a forerunner, as that is a relative word, if others were not to follow. As such he declares his going to heaven to be to prepare a place for his servants, he is as it were fitting up an apartment in that glorious palace and city for their more honourable reception ; he is laying in abundant provision and store for their eternal and comfortable accommodation : This he has long since done, and is now expecting their arrival at the same country, where he is ready to meet them on the shore of eternity, and usher them into the presence of God, and to conduct them to their prepared mansion or post in the heavenly paradise.

Now what does all this import, if it do not proclaim it to be the design of God and Christ, that his faithful servants should go to that holy place within the veil, and be where he is ? To what purpose should he intimate there are many mansions in God's heavenly house, if none of his disciples can come there ? Had it been only said, that he is entred as our high-priest, that might have well consisted
 with

with his going alone thither, and might have suggested some jealousy, that we could not follow, because the high-priest alone and no other with him must enter the typical holy place under the law, *Heb. ix. 7*. But to allay this it is said he is our *forerunner* as well as *high-priest*, another relation is joined, with which it is not only consistent, but it is necessarily implied, that others should enter, tho' (as is said in another case) every one in his order, first Christ, and then those, that are Christ's. Some then are to enter in, and who should they be but sincere holy disciples, who profess his gospel, and obey his laws, who flee to him for refuge, and fix their hope on high? This has in it more than a bare promise, it implies something of execution, when there is such preparation for it.

AND that Jesus Christ is such a forerunner to make way for us may easily be proved by the relation that holy saints stand in to him, and the union between them both. Can a tender parent enter into a large house or possession, and his children not reckon themselves to follow? Can an affectionate husband be called to royalty and dominion abroad, and the endeared wife not reckon it a pledge and

SERM. and forerunning of her own advancement?

XV. Even so Christ Jesus is our espoused husband, if we are chaste virgins: He is entred into glory, and sure it is in order to our following him; nay, he is our head and we his members; can he then arrive at his kingdom, and it have no relation to our intended approach to it? No sure: In this near relation we may behold him as our *Prodromus* or forerunner, he is gloriously exalted, and is now become the first fruits of them that are to be so. Hence we are not only risen with Christ in a way of spiritual comfort, *Col. iii. 1.* but are said in a sort to be exalted with him and in him, *Ephes. ii. 6.* In his exaltation God gives us an earnest of our own, and from his actual possession we receive a security, that we shall share in it.

FROM the foregoing discourse I shall make the following inferences.

1. How delightful a contemplation should that of Christ's exaltation be to a Christian, since in his glory we see a pledge of our own, nay, we see the way in which it is wrought, *viz.* by him as our forerunner! Here we see there is something behind the veil, not discernible

cernible by mortal eyes. All does not end where our short sight does, there is sunshine behind the clouds, and there is a way through that veil, which the Redeemer has found, and consequently we may do the same after him; nay, he is there in a public capacity in order to facilitate the arrival of his faithful servants: With what delight then and pleasure should we oft revolve this over in our most serious thoughts!

2. This may teach us to admire his gracious love in doing so kind a part for us, to allow us to have a share in the design of his own translation, and to assure us of it before he departed, *John xiv. 2.*

It was great glory he was going to, enough to have made his heart full of it to think what a glorious reward the Father would presently bestow upon him; so full of it, I say, as to exclude the thoughts of us and our concerns, it was so much for his own advancement, and so just upon his own account, that it is marvellous condescending goodness in him to place any thing of the design to our account; as if he went chiefly on that errand, so willingly does he embrace this office, And as he willingly owns that character, so he

as

SERM. as carefully discharges it. It will be seen shortly by every true Christian, what a place he has prepared, what a faithful harbinger he has been to all his members, when they arrive at those mansions. Oh great and condescending love, worthy to be thought on, worthy to be admired, and every way worthy of our best returns!

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3. THIS should particularly fortify true Christians against the fear of death. He, who died before you, has found the way into the heavenly sanctuary; you have his interest there improved to the best for you, nay, you may expect he is waiting for you, and will be ready to meet you on the other side the grave. What an heartening consideration is this! How chearfully may such breathe out their souls into his hands! Go then freely after him, who has prepared the way, go, trace him through the valley of death, descend after him into the grave, pursue him through the clouds, till you overtake him in the heavenly glory.

4. THIS calls upon us to follow him, who is our forerunner, in both senses of the word.

(1.) As

(1.) As he is merely gone before *as an example*, it invites us to follow him by imitation. We have no example so advantageous as his, none has given us so perfect a pattern as he has done, and no example is so accurately described to our view, nay, none has gained so great a triumph. Trace him then in his holy steps, follow him in going about doing good, learn of him to be meek and lowly, stoop with him in self-denial, hold your peace with him when reviled, take up your cross and follow him in patience and holy resolution: Seek no kingdom in this world, nor contend earnestly for it, but despise both the honour and the shame, the crowns and the crosses of this world, as he did, by real mortification to all below. Nor should it discourage us, that we cannot reach to that height of true piety that he did, nor be translated to the uppermost pinnacle of the temple, to which he is advanced; for he expects in us the proportion only of members, not of the head, besides that our reward must not be expected to be equal to his. But such as he was, such must we be in the main, of such principles, such temper, practices, and designs. But alas, how few are there who

SERM. have him in their eye, or aim at such a mark
 XV. as conformity to him! And yet how is he our
 forerunner, if we do not run after him, tho' we cannot keep pace with him? Be not therefore slothful, but followers of him, who through faith and patience is gone to possess the inheritance.

(2.) As he is gone before us *as our gracious harbinger*, it encourages us to hasten after in our affections, inclinations, and desires. Why did he go to prepare a place for us, but because we are supposed willing to go thither? And surely we should not only long to go, where we have so valuable a friend gone before, but much more, when he is gone to make preparation for us. Would we then disappoint him and his gracious design by being unwilling to leave the world and tarrying here for ever? Has he made all ready, and shall we be unready through our disinclination? It rather becomes us to be making haste after him, ardently wishing to see the mansions he has prepared. For if indeed he be our forerunner in this sense, it implies he is expecting and waiting for us. With what vehemence then, with what joyful insatiable desires should a soul breathe after heaven,

ven, who has not only preparation made for him, but a gracious Saviour looking for his arrival to enjoy it? SERM.
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5. LASTLY, it concerns us to get our hope well grounded on this, and to live in the constant exercise of it. See that he be yours in other relations, your quickening head, your ruling Lord, your prevailing instructor, and then he will be yours in this respect also. He was such to these *Hebrews* and to his own disciples, and all sincere tho' frail Christians may lay this claim to him. Then exercise this hope as they, who know they have such a friend in heaven to prepare for them and receive them there.

WITH such an anchor we may defy all the storms and tempests of this life, since neither life, nor death, nor persecution can drive us from it. Supported by this hope we are carries aloft and set like those on very high hills above the clouds, who see it thunder and storm below, while they are serene and quiet. It was this made *Moses* rich enough without the treasures of *Egypt*, and glad enough without the pleasures of sin.

LET us therefore learn to elevate and raise our souls by considering this great foundation in

SERM. the context, an hope relying on the word, nay,
XV. the oath of God, an hope entring within the
veil, and which sees a forerunner and an high-
priest there able to save to the uttermost.
Sure it should be felt in every Christian's
breast, and is quite another thing from that
poor worldly hope men talk so much of, and
will afford every heir of the promise strong
consolation and comfort.



S E R M O N

SERMON XVI.

*Christ entred into heaven as
our High-Priest.*

HEB. vi. 20.

*Whither the forerunner is for us entred, even
Jesus made an high-priest for ever after
the order of Melchisedec.*

IN a former discourse from these words I have
already shewn what is meant by entring
within the veil, the place where Christ
is gone to, and spoken to the first character,
under which he is here considered, *viz. Our
forerunner.*

I COME next to the consideration of the
other character he eminently bears, *viz. An*

SERM. *high-priest*; and here I shall treat of these four
 XVI. particulars.

I. WHAT is implied in the office of *high-priest*.

II. WHAT is implied in Christ's being an *high-priest after the order of Melchisedec*.

III. FOR whom it is that he thus enters as an *high-priest*. And,

IV. How or by what authority he became an *high-priest*.

I. I AM to shew what is implied in the office of *high-priest*. An *high-priest* in general imports the chief of them, who minister in sacred offices, or officiate for the people in things appertaining to God, *Heb. v. 1*. It supposes other priests inferior to him, in relation to whom he is called the *high priest*. All true Christians are said to be priests unto God, *Rev. i. 5*. but he is the *high-priest*: Or rather he is so called in relation to that character borne by others before him, in allusion to whom he is so named.

IT was not peculiar to the *Jews* to have this office among them, for the *Romans* had their *Pontifex Maximus*, which the Emperors annexed

annexed to the Imperial dignity, and till *Gratian's* time constantly assumed to themselves. But because the apostle is writing to the *Jews*, and does evidently all along compare Christ's high-priesthood with that under the law, we must therefore guide our inquiry about it from the office of the *Jewish* high-priest; tho' we must still remember the difference between the order of *Melchisedec* and that of *Aaron*, of which afterwards.

Now the chief and perhaps the only part, which was proper to the high-priest as such, and distinguished him from all others, was his making atonement in the most holy place on the day of expiation once a year, which was the great and general atonement for all *Israel*; therefore the text says, *he is entred within the veil as our high-priest*, because it was peculiar to the high-priest on that day to enter within the veil, which separated the oracle from the rest of the sanctuary, at which time he with great solemnity carried the blood of the slain goat and bullock into the most holy, and there sprinkled it seven times upon and before the mercy seat, *Lev. xvi.* and burnt incense before the mercy seat, till the place was filled with smoke; and this was all the

SERM. peculiarity belonging to his standing office;
 XVI. at least all the apostle has regard to, in making
 this atonement.

HERE it may be observed, that the slaying the sacrifice was not proper to the high-priest; other priests and Levites, nay, any man might kill his own sacrifice for sin, *Levit. i. 5.* and the Jews allow it even at the passover, as *Philo* expressly informs us. So *2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.* the priests had the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar as proper to them, and the high-priest had this proper to him to sprinkle it on the mercy seat in the most holy place; which abundantly shews us, that it was not the slaying the sacrifice, which made the atonement; that was only preparatory to it, but the atonement itself was made by the high-priest going with it in an humble manner to make intercession at the mercy seat, *Levit. xvi. 17.* The atonement was made in the holy place, not where the slaughter was, the carrying the blood was a sort of emblem of their own deserts to die, a symbolical way of confessing their sins, when they came as penitents to implore mercy, for at the same time all the people were to fast and humble themselves, and in this way the high-priest

priest by his intercession made atonement with the blood, *i. e.* obtained mercy.

Now to apply this to our Lord Jesus : His being styled an High-priest carries with it an allusion to what I have been saying. It implies, that some sacrifice had been first slain before he ascended. He had indeed suffered a violent death, which was an acceptable spiritual sacrifice on his part in the patience, humility, and obedience he exercised under it, *Ephes. v. 2.* but this was no part of the priestly office to be the sacrifice itself, no, the high-priests carried the blood of others, and herein Jesus Christ differed from them. However there was some resemblance in this, that till he was slain he was not to enter into heaven in the capacity of an high-priest, not till his own sufferings had fitted him for it, and he had by this obedience approved himself to God, *For in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, Heb. ii. 17.*

BUT the main resemblance lies in this, that like the high-priest he is now entred through the veil into the most holy place, *viz.* into heaven,

SERM. heaven, there to appear for us, *Heb. ix. 24.*

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and so to make atonement or obtain mercy by his intercession at the mercy seat or throne of grace. The atonement was to be made in the most holy place, *not without*, which signifies, that Christ's atonement was not made *on earth*, so much as it is *in heaven* by entering there to appear as our advocate. It was the offering made of the blood before the mercy seat, which made the atonement, not the killing the beast; accordingly Christ by offering himself in heaven or presenting himself there obtains our pardon on repentance; of *this offering* it is we read, ver. 25. *not that on the cross*, answerable to the high-priest's offering in the holy place, ver. 7. He is an high-priest *in heaven*, chap. viii. ver. 1. for he could not properly offer any thing *on earth*, ver. 3, and 4. therefore his offering spoken of in this epistle is undeniably his offering himself in heaven, in acting and interceding for us there. As the high-priest carried incense and made supplication in the most holy place with the names of all the tribes on his breast, while the people were praying without *Lev. xvi. 12. Luke i. 10.* so Christ presents his prayers with ours, and while we are

are praying *without*, he is offering incense *without* in the veil, joining his mediation to make all acceptable. See *Psal.* cxli. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3. which last is a plain allusion hereto.

HERE is sufficient whereon to ground the character of his being an high-priest, nor need we aim to make him and them agree exactly in every thing, nor can we. It is said chap. ix. ver. 12. that Christ with *his own blood* is entered into the holy place, as the high-priest did with *that of goats and calves*; but it is evident it is metaphorical, not material, blood; all the virtue of the Jewish sacrifices lay in their being slain and the blood separated, but Jesus Christ is entered alive without any material blood in his hand to present, because all their atoning virtue lay in their death, but Christ's propitiatory virtue is in his being alive to intercede; dead blood is not what he has carried with him, but yet the virtue of his death he has in some sense carried with him, that which God delighted in, *viz.* the patience, obedience, and regard to the honour of God, which he shewed in submitting to the death of the cross, which recommended him highly to God, and intitled him to so great dignity and favour: And in the acceptable
virtue

SERM. virtue of this excellent obedience he intercedes,
 XVI. nay, bestows pardon.

HENCE I suppose it is, *viz.* in that he saves by his life more than by his death, that the scriptures attribute our pardon and salvation to *his resurrection*, rather than *his death*. *Rom. iv. 25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* *Rom. v. 10. If we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled shall we be saved by his life.* And again *Rom. viii. 34. It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* The reason, I say, seems to be, because while dead he could not as high-priest enter within the veil to make atonement in the most holy place, *viz.* into heaven, where his business as high-priest lies according to the apostle; for we read nothing of his being such till his ascension into heaven.

THE upshot then of this is, that Jesus Christ as high-priest is gone to be our advocate for all needful mercy. This is but what himself said to his disciples, that he would pray for them, and what the other epistles mention, tho' not in the pontifical phrases used
 in

in this epistle to the *Hebrews*. What sort of intercession he makes in heaven we must not peremptorily determine, some suppose it to be wholly authoritative, because he is at the right hand of God, and they suppose that to be inconsistent with supplication, but since that dominion is only over creatures and under God, it seems not inconsistent for him, who is over all, to do an act of subjection to him, who has set him over all. It is certain himself speaks of his intercession in heaven, *John* xiv. 16. and the word *intercessions* being number'd among other words, which express petitioning, *1 Tim.* ii. 1. seems to favour the supposition of ordinary address, at least for that power, which he receives from his Father, by which he is able to help, bless, and save us. However he certainly interposes in our behalf, the great God for some wise ends chusing this way to dispense his favours, and admit our services by this great high-priest, whom he has set over the house of God.

II. I AM to shew what is implied in his being an high-priest *after the order of Melchisedec*.

HERE

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XVI.

HERE it will be proper to consider,
 I. THE person, of whose order he is an
 high-priest, *viz. Melchisedec*. The learned
 world have made a mighty stir to resolve the
 question who he was, who is so oft insisted
 on in this epistle, but an elaborate disquisition
 about it is scarce worth our while. Besides a
 short transient history of him in *Gen. xiv. 18,*
19, 20. we have only an obscure reference to
 him *Psalms cx. 4.* where what the text attri-
 butes to our Lord Jesus had been prophesied
 of.

ORIGEN supposes him to have been an
 angel in human shape, some antients said he
 was the Holy Ghost, other moderns say, that
 he was Jesus Christ himself, a likely matter,
 that he should have lived so long on earth as
 king and priest at *Salem* before the scriptures
 mention him to be born; besides, then he
 must have been a priest of his own order,
 which would have been a trifling tautology;
 at that rate *Abram* had seen his day indeed,
 but not by faith as Christ means. True, these
 with *Cunæus* and some others suppose it only
 an apparition in a priestly habit, that vanished
 again soon; but it is not to be supposed, that
Abram paid his respects to him, and gave
 him

him the tenths of his spoil without being first satisfied, who he was and whence he came, if he was a stranger to him.

IT is vain indeed to say who he was, because he has no pedigree in scripture, and having no father or mother mentioned how should any know who he was? this would suppose his family might be found out. It seems in general most natural to suppose, that he was some noted king of that country of *Canaan*, who was also an high-priest of his people, which office belonged to the chief and first of the family. He was certainly a true man, and therefore no doubt had father and mother as other men have, only there being nothing of it on record it is to appearance as if he had none; and here lies the whole mystery.

I CANNOT but observe from this, in that *Melchisedec* was a king of righteousness and priest of the most high God, that the knowledge of the true God and his worship was not wholly lost out of all the world, except *Abram's* family. Here was a country, in which his worship was maintained, tho' we know of no particular revelation they had, only the light of reason and common tradition:

SERM. dition : Yet here was a public high-priest and
 XVI. king, priest probably to his little kingdom,
 and held in sacred veneration by *Abram* him-
 self, who received his blessing, and being a
 king of righteousness, no doubt but he had
 subjects, who were so too ; nay, this man is
 made a representative of Christ's high priest-
 hood, rather than any of the *Aaronical* order,
 as of an order superior to it, which is

2. THE next thing to be considered, *viz.*
 in what respects Christ Jesus is an high-priest
 of this order, or answerable to *Melchisedec*.
 Why is he so characterized ?

I ANSWER,

(1.) HE is made such a priest on pur-
 pose to shew the *Mosaical* dispensation to be
 disannulled by God's appointing another high-
 priest, such as with that law was inconsi-
 stent.

To make out this you may see, that the
 Apostle's design is to convince these *Hebrews*,
 that the former *Mosaic* constitution was now
 antiquated, and to be laid aside by them, for
 its weakness chap. vii. ver. 18. This disan-
 nulling he proves by the change of the priest-
 hood ver. 12. which was so essential to that
 constitution, that it must needs fall with it.

This change of the priesthood he shews must necessarily be granted by them, who own Christ Jesus to be God's high-priest, as the Apostle asserted, because he could not be a legal priest by that law, not being of the tribe of *Levi* nor of the order of *Aaron*, ver. 13. 14. and yet that Jesus Christ was to be an high-priest of another order, and such as must infer the abolition of *Moses's* œconomy he proves from their own law, which declared the Messias should be a priest after the order of *Melchisedec* *Psal.* cx. 4. *Heb.* vii. 21. and tho' the modern *Jews* would apply that text to *David*, yet it is evident he speaks the words himself of another person, *He said to my Lord*, and both Jesus Christ and the *Jews* of his days understood them of the Messias *Mat.* xxii. 43. that *David* called him Lord in the spirit (*i. e.* of prophecy, a Lord, that should arise thereafter,) which they denied not, but could not answer his question upon it, not understanding Christ's spiritual kingdom, of which *David* was to be a subject, and so Christ his Lord; whereas in such a worldly kingdom as the Pharisees dreamt of under the Messias *David* being dead could have no place nor reason to call him Lord.

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So then by their own law a Messias was to come, who was to be an high-priest after the order of *Melchisedec*: Now that was to be different from the order of *Aaron*, as the author of this epistle proves *chap. vii.* because he was not of *Abram's* seed, nor could make out such a pedigree as their law made necessary, therefore it is said ver. 3. that he was without father or mother or descent, that is, none did appear, and consequently no regard was had to his pedigree, altho' an high-priest. *q. d.* Your law requires an exact proof of a pedigree from *Levi* and *Aaron*, else there can be no admission to the priesthood, but this high-priest *Melchisedec* was owned as such without taking any notice what family he was of, of which there is no mention, as if it were on purpose to shew, that he was not such as their *Jewish* high-priests must be, and such an one as he was, the Messias is foretold to be; and therefore the priesthood being thus to be changed by him, there must necessarily be a disannulling of their law under that Messias, who is an high-priest after the order of *Melchisedec*.

(2.) HE is said to be after the order of *Melchisedec* to shew him to be a royal or regal priest, a priest and sovereign king also;
Melchisedec

Melchisedec had both these powers in one, he was king of Salem, and priest of the most high God, chap. vii. ver. 1. These characters were often joined together, *Rex hominum divinusque sacerdos*. The supreme magistrate thought to increase the people's reverence by officiating in sacred matters as *Pontifex Maximus*, so far was that office from being counted a diminution to their honour, that majesty itself was made more illustrious by it.

IN the Jewish law these two offices were not conjoined but usually distinct, and tho' *Eli* was both judge and high-priest, yet when they had kings, the offices were separate, and in two different tribes. The blessed Jesus therefore was to be after the order of *Melchisedec*, because he was to have a mighty dominion as King of Kings, and Lord of angels and men. He is both a Prince and a Saviour, has all power given him in heaven and earth, and is the appointed judge of all men, whose authority we must revere, whose laws we must obey, and whose honour and interest we must truly serve before the dearest interest in the world.

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(3.) A THIRD reason is to shew the perpetuity of his office, *Thou art, a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

WHETHER after having answered the end, for which it was instituted, this office shall not cease, as well as his mediatorial kingdom shall be delivered up to his Father, the text says not, for tho' it be said to be *for ever*, yet that is usually said of things, which shall remain as long as the present dispensation, to which they serve, continues, as long as there will be occasion for any thing of that nature, especially when it is to endure to a very remote period; So *Numb. xxv. 13. Phineas* the son of *Eleazer* the son of *Aaron* is said to have the covenant of *an everlasting* priesthood, and yet that order of *Aaron* is long since ended.

BUT here it plainly imports more, *viz.* an office, that shall never be superseded, shall never have a successor as those mortal priests had, of which there was a shadow and resemblance in *Melchisedec*, which is emphatically noted by the Apostle, that it is *for ever*. Not that *Melchisedec* was immortal, but there being no mention of the end of his days, nor of any successor to him, this had the

the figure of a perpetuity, and in an allegorical way of speech he is said to abide a priest continually, *chap. vii. ver. 3.* like to a son of God, or an angel says Dr. *Whitby*.

THE *Jewish* high-priest was but for a while, and during that law it was exercised by mortal men, and kept up by many successions, *ver. 23.* but Jesus Christ lives for ever in an immortal state, and an incorruptible temple not made with hands, and is succeeded by none. He does all alone, they oft repeated their entrance within the veil every year, he once for all presents himself in heaven.

THUS it is that the author endeavours to persuade the *Hebrew* converts, that the gospel was a better religion, or rather a better dispensation, than that of *Moses*, having a far more excellent and nobler high-priest, even Jesus Christ, made a priest for ever after the order of *Melchisedec*:

III. I AM in the next place to consider, for whom it is that Christ thus enters as an high-priest. For us, these words extend to both the characters mentioned in the text, but more especially to this of high-priest, for so it is expressly said, *chap. ix. ver. 24.* That

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Christ is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven it self now to appear in the presence of God for us. And indeed herein he differs from the other Aaronical high-priests, for they were of like sinful infirmities with the rest of the people, and consequently needed an expiation for themselves also, chap. v. ver. 2, 3. By reason hereof he ought as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins. The high-priest had a sin-offering of a bullock, with which he was first to make atonement for his own person and house, and then for the people he had another sacrifice. Likewise his first entrance into the holy place with blood was on his own account, and then afterwards on that of the people. Levit. xvi. 11, 15.

BUT now it is not so with Christ, he is entred *for us* only, and not *for himself* under this character. He was the lamb without spot, that needed no atonement nor pardon, of whom God testifies, that in him he was well pleased; God had nothing to lay to his charge, whereby he had offended justice or needed mercy. In the mistaken sense of the malignant and vulgar *Jews* he was judged to

to have sufficiently deserved punishment as a malefactor, but see how the prophet corrects that error, *Isaiab liii.* He is entred with his blood within the veil upon the same account, as that on which he shed it. On our behalf he died, and for us he mediates and intercedes, and pleads his own blood at the mercy seat for our forgiveness. On his breast are the names of his *Israel*, of whom he is ever mindful in his glorious state, as well as in his low abasement.

SERM.
XVI.

IV. How is it that Christ became an high-priest? The text says he is *made so*, that is, he is ordained and commissioned so to be by God himself; for had he assumed this office to himself he could not have officiated acceptably and with full authority, since there could be no assurance, that his blood and mediation would be accepted, unless God had appointed him, because whatever value there was in that precious blood and powerful intercession; yet it is God's great mercy, that allows it to be prevalent for us; Christ Jesus therefore is commissioned by God for this office, him the Father hath sealed, this is expressly said, chap. v. ver. 4, 5. *And no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was*

SERM. Aaron, *so also Christ glorified not himself to*
 XVI. *be made an high-priest, but he that said unto*

him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As under the law it was by divine authority (both the office and the person) in the *Aaronical* line, not who could make the most interest to get this preferment, (tho' in after times from the captivity it was often so,) so also was Christ's priesthood, which was confirmed to him by an oath, *chap. vii. ver. 21*, a more solemn commission than the other high-priests ever had. Thus was he sent of God, and his service is most sure of acceptance.

I COME now in the last place to make some uses of the foregoing discourse.

I. WE must here acknowledge the great and continued love of our Lord Jesus to us.

IT is of high concern, that we should preserve an affectionate regard for our blessed Saviour, and since love and benefits bestowed is the great motive of love, we must not overlook his abundant kindness to us. It is said he loved his own to the end, and we may here perceive it to be more persevering than to the end of his life on earth. He continues

tinues a compassionate high-priest still, and when he left the world, it was with the kindest expressions, *I will pray the father for you, I go to prepare a place for you,* John xiv. SERM. XVI.

INDEED his own grievous trouble made it so needful to eye his own future glorification, that it were not to be wondered it should wholly possess his mind, but yet in his great love to his disciples he has their case still at heart, and speaks as if the great design of his going was for them. Shall we then not love him, who yet loves us so tenderly? And while he acts for us above, ought we not to serve, and do, or suffer for him here below? since being thus persuaded, we may with *Stephen* as it where behold the heavens opened, and *Jesus* sitting at the right hand of God, *Acts* vii. 56.

2. THIS should be a great encouragement to us in our addresses to Heaven for relief under all our afflictions and miseries, for so the Apostle exhorts us *to come boldly to the throne of grace*, from this consideration, that *we have not an high-priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, sin only excepted*, Heb. iv. 15, 16. nay, it is a mighty consolation,

SERM. consolation, when under a penitent sense of
 XVI. great guilt we apply for pardon and forgive-

ness, for if any man sin we have an advocate
 with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,

1 John ii. 1. True, God is of himself infinite in
 mercy, but it helps us to have a sensible pledge

of it in Christ Jesus. In his name therefore
 he bids us to pray the father, John xvi. 23.

not in his authority only, (for sure he had
 warranted them to pray before that ver. 24.)

but using his name also or confiding in his me-
 diation, that as they had believed in God,

they should believe in him too, John xiv. 1.
 God may think fit to grant through Christ

what he thinks not so without him. We are
 priests but in subordination to this high-priest,

who alone officiates within the veil, that
 throne of grace, which he has sprinkled in

our favour Heb. iv. 16.

3. LET this be improved to strengthen the
 hope of Christians concerning their final sal-

vation. It is mentioned in the text as a mat-
 ter, which affords great assurance to the heirs

of the promises, that Jesus is entred as high-
 priest for us. As a forerunner he has taken

possession and prepared a place, and that pre-
 paration

paration is chiefly made by the exercise of his priestly office there.

WHAT then should hinder a Christian's complete salvation? Does he want persevering grace, or fear the strength of temptation? Is not here relief sufficient? Cannot Christ Jesus obtain assistance, and say his grace shall be sufficient for him? Does he dread the guilt of daily infirmities, or some aggravating sin, which has betrayed him to the wounding of his soul? Can there be a more powerful antidote than that of Christ's entering within the veil with his atoning blood? In short whatever is wanting he can supply us with; and hence it is, that the scriptures lay the stress of a Christian's security on Christ's intercession, *Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25.*

LABOUR then so to please him, that he may espouse your interest, and then doubt not but he can save to the uttermost all that are truly obedient to him. Let this fill you with joy and peace in believing, look with great expectation for the remainder of your salvation, which must be accomplished by his life; *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by*

SERM. *by his life*, Rom. v. 10. triumphing by faith

XVI.

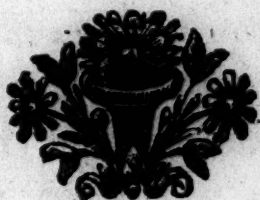
in him over all the powers of hell, over all your own humbling weakneses and sins, while you foresee the glorious preparation he has made for you, and how he will present you faultless before the throne of God. Let this hope revive you, and make you think little of all the clouds and trials of this present world, since you trust you shall be soon called within the veil to stand your selves in the divine presence, and taste the consummate fruition of your Redeemer's love.

LASTLY for caution, We must not think, that Christ Jesus will save us, if we leave all to him, so as to neglect true holiness and obedience ourselves. He will, nay, he can save only the godly and the righteous, who live in obedience to his laws. He is the author of eternal salvation to such only as obey him, *Heb. v. 9. I know you not* will be said to all the workers of iniquity, to all slothful servants, let them come with never so much confidence, and plead never so many sacraments and ordinances, or familiar eating and drinking in his presence.

THERE are some, who seem to talk, as if it were a disparagement to our Redeemer for them

them to have any regard to duties, which they call works; as if strong confidence were enough on their part, and his intercession and atonement would do all, when they have lived carnal and worldly lives, destitute of that holiness, without which none shall see the Lord: But this is desperate presumption, it is not *a saving* but *a damning* faith to expect salvation by Christ in our sins.

WE must *come to God* by him, else we are not of those, whom he is able to save; his mediation is not designed to save such as are incapable of it, but them only, who are made meet by true holiness and unblameable lives. Virtuous works are no more a disparagement to our Saviour's undertaking, than it is to a physician, that his patient is cured by carefully observing his prescriptions. He is a friend to the obedient and willing, but no refuge to the obstinately rebellious or careless.



call works; as if from confidence were e-
XVI. them to have any regard to duties, which they

SERMON XVII.

*The suppression of public vice
an honourable employment*.*

I SAM. ii. 30.

*Them that honour me I will honour; and
they, that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.*

AS it is easy to apprehend the important consequences of that excellent work, for the furtherance of which we are here met, viz. The endeavouring an effectual restraint upon the open indecencies of a lewd age: So I doubt not, but the trial, which some of you have made herein, hath convinced you more than ever, that not a few

* Preached at Dublin Octob. 4. 1698. before the Societies for Reformation of manners.

SERM. few discouragements are like to attend the
XVII. promotion of so pious a design; that the
 strong man armed, after so long and quiet a
 possession, is not to be turned out but with
 conflict and violence; that those sons of *Be-
 lial*, who, if let alone, will surely prove as
 thorns in your sides by provoking the anger
 of heaven against us, are, when you thrust
 them away, as thorns in your hands; so,
 that as *David* speaks, *he that touches them,*
had need be fenced with iron and the staff of
a spear, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.

SINCE therefore it is now my part to
 strengthen your hands, that they may never
 hang down in the pursuit of so sacred an at-
 tempt, I have judged it requisite to lay before
 you some motives, that may be proportionable,
 both to the greatness of your task, and the va-
 riety of your discouragements.

AND I think there is enough contained in
 the text to answer my end; for it intimates
 your work to be honourable in God's account,
 and that it shall redound to your own im-
 mortal honour in the issue.

HUMAN nature never acts with more vio-
 lence and force, than when it feels the power
 of aspiring ambition after great renown, and

tho', my brethren, I hope the fading honour of this world is contemptible in your eye, as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal; yet honour from God is a great thing, all ambition is just, but none too great, nor any contention too warm, where this is the prize.

How suitable an application to the present occasion my text will admit of may better be seen after a little inquiry into the context. It is part of a sad message from God, and for the greater solemnity sent by a man of God to *Eli*, who was over the tribes of *Israel* a judge; and over the house of God, the high-priest: How he came by the latter dignity, is not evident; both from scripture and *Josephus* it appears, that he was not of the elder line of *Aaron's* family by *Eleazer*, but of the younger from *Ithamar*, and consequently not the legal heir to that honour; but sometime, during the rule of the *Judges* over *Israel*, the high-priesthood was translated to the younger line; for what cause is not known: A very learned * author in the *Jewish* history supposes it might be because of the miscarriage of the high-priest in permitting *Jeptbab* to sacrifice his daughter, when he should have counselled him better out of the law of God; and this

A a supposition

* *Lightf.* Vol. II. p. 1218.

SERM. supposition of his may find some countenance

XVII. from that relation of some of the *Jewish* doctors, which I meet with * elsewhere: They say, that *Jephthah* disdained to go to the high-priest for a commutation, or release from his vow; and he would not go to *Jephthah*, because he did not ask his help; therefore say they, *Jephthah was smitten with the palsy, and the high-priest was deprived of the spirit of God*: And if so much be true, the other is no unlikely supposition. By this it seems *Eli* in his possession of that office carried a memorial of God's displeasure against the neglecters of his honour, and yet himself incurs it the same way; not by any positive presumptuous crime of his own, but by remissness of checking the prophaneness of others.

THE iniquity of his sons was come to an unsufferable and daring height, they prostituted their sacred function to their *sensuality* and lust, as it is set down from verse 12, to verse 18. Such was their contempt of God, that tho' the tabernacle was his house, and they were only his guard and attendants, and the sacrifices his provisions, yet they would be served first, and would carve for their own bellies, before it went to God's table, I mean, before

* *Tayl. Duct. dub. p. 579.*

before the fat was burnt on his altar. And being thus highly fed, *like horses they neighed after their neighbour's wife*, Jer. v. 8. *They lay with the women at the door of the tabernacle*, ver. 22. as if they would affront God to his face, putting their filth under his nose; thus his house was now made a den of harlots and adulterers, that afterwards was so of thieves and robbers; insomuch that *men abhorred the offering of the Lord*, ver. 17. For it cannot but grieve conscientious worshippers to see the sacred solemnities of religion pass through unhallowed hands, that reap indeed the benefit of others reverence for God, while themselves shew none.

BUT what is this to *Eli*, that he must suffer for other men's sins? It was because *he restrained them not*, chap. iii. ver. 13. He did indeed reprove them, chap. ii. ver. 24. He dealt gently with the young men; but impudent sinners require sharper corrections than friendly rebukes; like the unruly *Leviathan*, *they laugh at the shaking of that spear*, and those arrows will not make them flee, Job xli. 28, 29. So that when better remedies are in our power, a bare reproof of bold sinners is no sufficient discharge of our duty;

SERM. God counts this for nothing in *Eli*; He, as a
 XVII. magistrate, should have made them public ex-
 amples for a warning to others: For neglecting
 this God sends him a severe message, upbraid-
 ing him with ingratitude for past favours so ill-
 requited; charging him with honouring his
 sons above his God; for to save their reputa-
 tion he let God's sink and fall; and then re-
 canting all his former thoughts of kindness, all
 his conditional promises, he threatens him and
 his family with utter ruin to the generations
 to come. The reason and equity of which pro-
 cedure in this and like cases he expresses
 in the words of the text, *Be it far from me,
 for them that honour me, I will honour.* As
 if he had said after the manner of men, I
 had once a great kindness for thee and thy
 house, and hadst thou concerned thy self to
 vindicate my name by suppressing and punish-
 ing the wickedness of those vile wretches, thou
 hadst lost no honour by it, I would have ad-
 vanc'd thee to great dignity; but now far be
 it from me, to honour such a despiser of his
 God, no, 'tis farthest from my thoughts, thy
 name shall perish, thy memory rot, thy
 family sink, and thy posterity shall continue
 only to be by their poverty and ignominy the

monuments

monuments of thy sin, and my indignation; SERM.
I'll reserve my favours for them, that shall do XVII.
me the service, which thou refusedst. And that
you may not think this proceeding to be any
singular instance with *Eli* only, God lays it
down as a general rule, *Them that honour*
me, I will honour, and they, that despise me,
shall be lightly esteemed.

HAVING led you thus to a right view of
the words, I suppose I shall do no violence to
them by deducing from them this proposi-
tion,

THAT they, who honour God by endea-
vouring to suppress and punish the scandalous
crimes of prophane sinners, shall have their
zeal repaid with eminent returns of honour
from him; while they, who are unconcerned
for his glory in that matter, shall be the objects
of contempt and disdain.

THE latter branch may serve to enforce
the former, which I shall prosecute under
these general heads:

I. I SHALL endeavour to shew, that such,
as are sincerely engaged in this design, do
honour God in it.

SERM. II. THAT God will repay their zeal by
XVII. honouring them,

III. I SHALL apply the whole to excite and encourage you, that are or may be engaged in this happy affair.

I. THEY, who endeavour to suppress the scandalous crimes of the age, do greatly honour God: He, who is the best judge of his own honour, plainly owns it here, in that he charges *Eli* with failing to honour him by neglecting this work.

AND here I must consider, *first* what it is to honour God, and *then*, how we may apply it to such persons. As for honouring God in general, it is not like his honouring us, which is by conferring some excellency or dignity upon us to make us greater than we were before: It is God's honour, that he is not capable of such as this; he cannot be a more glorious exalted Being than he is. We can therefore honour God only such ways as these, either *internally*, by high and lofty conceptions of his being and perfections, by being fill'd with adoring admiring apprehensions of his infinite majesty, wisdom, power, and goodness;

ness; making him the object of our chief esteem, and superlative love. Or *externally*, by some sensible manifestation of this; of which open visible honour, I am principally to speak: And in general it is to be given one of these two ways.

(1.) WHEN we wipe off any dishonour or reproach cast upon God, preventing or removing what may tend to disparage his perfections, to weaken his authority with men, to abate of his due reverence, or to render him cheap and mean in the eyes of any; this is to preserve his honour.

(2.) WHEN we do any thing that represents him great and glorious to others, when we express our own high thoughts of God, so as to give occasion to others to raise their esteem of him, whether it be by words or actions, and these either of worship or other obedience; so praise glorifies God, *Psal. 1. ult.* It declares his excellency, and raises admiration; any thing, that greatens God in the sense of men, is an honour done to him.

Now I come to apply it by shewing, that they do thus honour God, who labour to sup-

SERM. press open prophaneness: And this will fully
 XVII. appear, if we consider,

I. THAT open prophaneness is a great dishonour to God, from the reproach of which these persons seek to rescue his name. Tho' the eyes of God are so very pure, that the least mote of sin offends them as truly as the greatest beam, yet not in the same measure; God is dishonoured, and his law affronted by every indulged sin, be it never so well covered under the veil of secrecy, or disguised by the art of hypocrisy; but then it is but like a private affront, which puts not half that disgrace upon a man, as an open abuse. Some reverence for God is yet preserved among men, when the sons of *Belial* do in outward behaviour imitate the sons of God, when the devil dares not appear in his own colours, but, as of old in *Saul's* time, shrouds himself under the prophet's mantle. But when men declare their sin as *Sodom*; when their crimes are of the first magnitude, and in open view; when they swear in the market-place, reel in the streets, and assemble themselves by troops in harlots houses; then the honour of God receives a deep wound, and the highest contempt is poured on that Being of infinite majesty,

jesty, as tho' he were a being of no authority, whose will they dare at any time contradict, whose indignation they challenge, and whose threatnings they treat with mockery and scorn. Such things as these sink the esteem of God in the world, and make him contemptibly spoken of, *Rom. ii. 23, 24.* Some are tempted hereby to say, That he hath *forsaken the earth*, and minds not what is done there, *Ezek. ix. 9.* Others, That God is like themselves, not so much an enemy to their crimes, as some pretend, *Psal. l. 21.* And if such men go on without check in this manner, what will become of the honour of God at present? How will his authority and worship be upheld, or his memorial be preserved among men?

Now from this grievous contempt the friends of God would gladly see his name vindicated; which must be either by *reclaiming* such vile offenders, of which there is almost no hope, for can the *Ethiopian* change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *Jer xiii. 23.* then may such long accustomed over-grown sinners learn to do well: Or by *punishing* them with marks of public disgrace, this may prove a means of reforming them, who having no feeling in
their

SERM. their feared consciences are in vain attacked
 XVII. with serious counsel and arguments, but it
 may be will learn, when taught, as the men
 of *Succoth* were by *Gideon*, with briars and
 thorns; or as *Manasseh*, by fetters and bonds:
 However, such public punishments will de-
 ter others from an imitation, and will be an
 open testimony, that the community disowns
 such persons with shame and indignation, and
 cannot with patience bear their insolent affronts
 of the great God: These methods will very
 much prevent the common contempt of God,
 they teach the people to look upon such sins
 with horror, as base and criminal acts; and
 thus in a good measure the honour of God is
 maintained by suppressing open immorality in
 the general.

AND among all the works of darkness that
 are common, I think there are none, against
 which the wounded honour of God more re-
 quires your zealous help, than against those
 enormities, which you of *these Societies* have
 taken special cognizance of, viz. prophane
 swearing and cursing, breaking the sabbath,
 and abominable uncleanness; crimes so hein-
 ous, that one can hardly say, as God to the
 prophet,

prophet, *Son of man*, I will shew thee yet greater abominations than these. SERM.
XVII.

As for prophane oaths and curses, the monstrous sins of our age, in which for a long time oaths have vied with words for number, and the studied eloquence of the times hath been how to swear in the most thundering and terrifying dialect. Can any thing express more scorn of the sacred and tremendous name of God, than to make it the wanton by-word of our common talk, and the mention of it, the usual fruit of our madness and fury? That men, when angry at their fellow-creatures, should take their revenge on God by tearing and rending his dreadful name! That God and the devil should both be regarded alike by them! For either word serves the turn, that which first comes in their way, and usually where God's name is at the beginning of a sentence in an horrid oath, the devil's is at the end of it in an hellish curse, and they seem to have an equal respect for both.

As for the breach of the *Holy Sabbath*, since nothing hath a more direct aspect upon the honour of God, than the reverence and solemnities of his publick worship in united assemblies ;

SERM. semblies; and since he hath intimated his
XVII. will, that this be on one day in seven, it must
 needs be a bold stroke at his honour in them,
 that needlessly refuse to contribute openly to
 it. It was a sacrilegious thieving from God's
 altar, that was part of the heavy charge a-
 gainst *El's* sons, they would have God's
 portion, and force him to change without his
 consent, *Ch. 2. ver. 15, 16.* And is not the
 sacrilege as great in defrauding him of his
 time and the homage belonging to him?
John ii. 15, 16. We find an unusual flame
 of zeal in our Saviour's breast upon an irre-
 verent prophanation of that holy temple,
 where God visibly dwelt; and will not his
 day deserve as zealous a vindication, as his
 house? Since they are two circumstances of
 one rank, can any one tell me, why *Hallow-
 ed time* should not be as sacred as an *Hallowed
 place*? Oh, how dishonourable then to God
 is their crime, who prostitute his sacred time
 to secular uses! One is journeying, another
 physicking, and a third taking his pleasure;
 and thus the Lord's day is made a very dung-
 hill day, on which ungodly men throw all
 the refuse-business of an idle or mis-spent
 week; and many of these are under self-con-
 demnation,

demnation, while at other times they can stand up in the solemn assemblies to profess an obligation on their consciences to observe the fourth commandment; but yet alas, their hearts are not inclined to keep that law!

As for the shameless violations of the laws of *chastity*, they have been, both by God, and many pagan nations, numbred among the blackest crimes, insomuch that God hath peculiar reserves of vengeance for those that commit them: *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge, Heb. xiii. 4.* It is such an awful and terrifying word, which dropt from the wise-man, that it may astonish us to think how any man's conscience can get over it without agonies of dread: *The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit, he, that is abhorred of the Lord, falls therein, Prov. xxii. 14.* And this was another of the scandalous and punishable faults of *Eli's* sons.

Now these things shew, what mighty service you will do for the glory of God, if you can cover his name from these affronts of scornful men, either by suppressing their vices, or making them shameful and costly to such, as will give them harbour. Oh, how honourable would the name of God be, if we could

SERM. could but see the day, when none should
XVII. dare to use it but with solemnity and reverence! When none shall take an oath, but as a part of the serious awful worship he owes to the omniscient ruler of the world; when an universal silence on the sabbath-day from the noise of secular business shall help to proclaim our profound veneration of God, while he is in his holy habitation.

2. SUCH persons do directly honour God in their sincere attempts of this kind, as they plainly manifest their own great esteem of God, and reverence for his laws: What greater representation can men give of God, than that he is a being whose reproach they cannot bear, one so great, so good, so loved by his servants, that they are content to vindicate his honour with the most expensive zeal? Sure it is to the glory of God, when the world shall see he hath some friends, who dare espouse his quarrel, some who are open advocates for his despised authority; that in a degenerate age there are some to protest against the usurpation of Satan; so that if God be not honoured by a reformation of the public, yet in as much as you have vigorously contended for it, I may say as the Apostle, *On*
your

your part he is glorified, tho' on theirs he is
evil spoken of, 1 Pet. iv. 14. SERM.
XVIII

II. THE next general head is to shew,
how God will honour them, that shew such
tenderness for his honour.

I. HE will honour them by his own
esteem and approbation of them; they may
be the world's dross, but they shall be God's
jewels: The men of *Sodom* scoffed at *Lot*
for reproving them, but God honoured him
as a *righteous soul*, 2 Pet. ii. 8. The prophane
crew may cry out upon you, as they against
St. Paul, *Away with such fellows, they are*
not fit to live, *Acts* xxii. 22. But God will
say rather, *Of you the world was not worthy*,
Heb. xi. 38. And I hope God's good word is
more to you, than the applauses of all the
world.

2. HE may probably place visible marks
of honour upon them in this life. Our good
name is in God's keeping, who hath many
ways to advance our esteem, and when he
pleases, our rankest enemies shall contribute to
it, as *Mordecai* found. All promotion hath
its rise in the court of heaven, so that he per-
mits

SERMON. mits or hinders it as he pleases, *Psalms lxxv.*
XVII. 6, 7.

HE can bless your substance unto abundance, and put you into the common road of honour. Or he may honour you another way, *viz.* by giving you great success in your worthy attempts; and verily that will be no small renown to be such blessings in your places; to be conquerors over the vices of the age; to hide a multitude of sins, and to save a nation from ruin. Such a good name will be a precious ointment of everlasting favour.

AND verily, sirs, God hath in part thus honoured you; it is to your glory, that not only at home, but abroad in the neighbouring kingdom, some of us have heard the fame of your zeal. I may say to you, as *St. Paul* to the *Thessalonians*, *1 Thess. i. 9.* (only putting your *zeal* instead of their *faith*) that it is every where spoken of. They needed not, that we should tell them, for themselves shew us concerning you: They can tell that *Dublin* is no safe harbour for the prophane and lewd to come to; that in it are magistrates and people, who profess themselves a terror to evil-doers.

3. GOD will not fail to honour them eminently in another world, and there great things shall be done to the man, whom the king of heaven shall delight to honour: There doubtless they, who have laboured to turn many from unrighteousness, as well as they, that have turned many to righteousness shall shine, not with the common and faint glimmering of the firmament, but with the more bright lustre of the stars, *Dan. xii. 3.* Yea, they shall differ from other stars in glory.

I SHALL now proceed to make an application of the foregoing discourse.

I. Is God so highly honoured by such endeavours? Then let us all be concerned for his honour in this way: The text suggests to you the weightiest argument in the world, *viz.* That you should do it *for God's sake*, and the most sensible argument, do it for *your own sake*; it is the cause of God's honour and your own interest: But methinks nothing should more move us, than the just but terrible interpretation God will put upon our neglect to promote this work, even, *that we despise him*; as tho' he were some contemptible being, whose glory we think not worthy

SERM. our contending for. Dare we lie under so
 XVII. heavy a charge? Certainly, my brethren, we
 serve a God, whose honour well deserves our pains to uphold it; nay, can we make him the great object of our solemn adoration, and daily homage? Can we think him meet, at whose feet to cast our selves down in a reverend prostration, and yet at the same time not judge his honour worth maintaining? This wou'd reproach our selves with the grossest stupidity for worshipping one with awful dread, whom we are content should be made contemptible with others. Ah, base creature, that hast such a God, of such infinite majesty, wisdom, and goodness, and yet refusest to plead for him! A dumb and useles idol might serve thy turn, since thou carest not how mean and vile the object of thy worship is.

BUT I would rather hope of you that hear me now, that you are rather inquisitive, how you may contribute to God's honour in this affair: Probably you'll say, from such a man as *Eli* God might expect it, he being an eminent magistrate had power to do what private persons cannot, had we the sword of justice, we would surely draw it in God's quarrel

rel and defence ; but what can we do now? I answer,

1. IT is indeed most true, that magistrates have more eminent advantages for honouring God this way, which they should by no means lose. They are the life of every honourable enterprize, giving *credit* to it by their example, and *security* by the shelter of their authority, they are the principal wheel in all regular public motions ; if they stop, or move heavily and unwillingly, the whole affair halts ; tho' inferior persons should be never so zealous, yet without them they may sit down and lament, that the children are come to the birth, but there is no strength to bring forth.

FOR this reason it might be that *reforming work* was not pursued in the two late reigns, tho' the same persons were then living, that with such pious resolution began it since in the metropolis of the neighbouring kingdom ; they were then formed, tho' more secretly, into a religious society ; but there was so much wickedness at that time in high places, that such a design could find no countenance : But now that public authority, as a monument of gratitude for our late deliverance, hath declared war against those domestic enemies, I

SERM. mean our scandalous impieties, now, that
 XVII. our king hath decreed this justice, and our
 { parliaments have voted down profaneness, now
 that wholesome laws are enacted, (may they be
 as irreverfible as the laws of the *Medes* and
Persians!) we fee there wants not a number,
 who are ready to run to that banner, which is
 difplay'd for the honour of God, fo great
 is the magiftrate's influence in this matter;
 yea, even of fubordinate ones, that the caufe
 of God's pafling fentence upon *Jerufalem*
 was this, they could not find one that would
execute judgment, not a magiftrate would ap-
 pear to countenance what was good, fo that
 fuch may be faid to be entrusted with *ten ta-*
lents, when private perfons have but *one* or
two.

WHAT confcience then fhould they make
 of fuch a great price in their hands? fince this
 is the very exprefs end, which God, who gives
 them their power, and will fhortly ask an ac-
 count of the ufe of it, hath affigned it to,
viz. to be a *terror to evil doers*, Rom. xiii. 4.
 Were I to be their monitor, it fhould be in
David's words, *Be wife O ye rulers, be in-*
structed O ye judges of the land, ferve the
Lord with fear: Kifs the Son, left he be an-
gry,

gry, Psal. ii. 10, 11. I would humbly ask, whose superscription do you bear? And since the truth, as well as a regard to your own honour, allows you to say, *God's*; then render to him the things that are his. You would not incur the suspicion of disloyalty to your prince by conniving at public affronts to his name or person; it would be with you a strong argument, which they used to *Pilate*, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend*, Job. xix. 12, 13. It touched him so to the quick, that he durst shew no more favour to our Blessed Lord: Why should it not be a stronger argument to tell you, that you are not God's friends if you let profligate offenders escape? In a word, magistrates should be like the heavenly orbs, not barely to roll over the people's heads in a lordly dominion, but also to afford a benign aspect upon the commonweal.

2. YET as every *common soldier*, without leaving his rank, may do good service in the battel, as well as his *commander*, so may all of you cast some mites into this treasury of God's honour in such instances as these,

(1.) You may serve his honour in this matter by laying the impieties of the prophane

SERM. before the magistrate in order to punishment.

XVII.

Be not ashamed to come in as a witness for the Great King of heaven; *Eli* found many informers against his own sons, this aggravated his crime in not restraining them. If magistrates will not execute justice, the guilt lies at their door, but if you do not carry it thither, I fear it will lie at your own: We oft speak of bearing a *testimony against national sins*; the best testimony, that I know of, is that before a magistrate in order to their being punished. I truly think no customary bold sinner, that openly offends, should be spared, tho' he were our companion. Remember *Eli* suffered for sparing the off-spring of his own bowels; when God upon the scornful language of a degenerate age cries out, *Who is on my side?* Who dares but offer himself? And as all should do their part in general, so it were to be wish'd, that some, who are most capable of prudent active service, would join themselves to those societies, which are well enough known in this city, to bear part of the burden in this both *necessary* and *legal* design, as sinners *join hand in hand* to escape punishment, so should you join to prevent them; *Prov. xi, 28.* Let me tell you, in
this

this case more than ordinary concern should be shown, that passage of *Austin* being applicable here; *Non amat, qui non zelat.* He is hardly a friend of God, that is not warm and earnest in this important service.

(2.) MANY of you may honour God in this work with your *substance*, *Prov. iii. 9.* You know the precept is general, but when you come to put it in practice, it must be in some particular instance, and I know no occasion, to which I may more properly apply it, than this in hand, being an affair that necessarily involves in it considerable expences, of which the occasions are just and honourable. Much may be said to commend such liberality; let it be consider'd, that it excels ordinary charity to the poor, which yet Christ will take eminent notice of in the day of judgment, and to which so many remarkable promises are made by him. The great advantage of which is, that God will allow it to have an ultimate reference to himself, *In as much as ye have done it to these, you did it to me, Matt. xxv. 40.* But in this case, what we give is more directly and immediately done to God without the benefit of such a favourable construction as that.

SERM.

XVII.

BESIDES, such occasions do not offer themselves so frequently as those for common charity, you are always encompassed with objects of that nature, but you have not always such noble designs on foot for the honour of God to require your aid; so that I may very properly here apply Christ's words on something a like occasion; *The poor you have always with you, but me ye have not always*, Matt. xxvi. 11. Take therefore the present opportunity.

(3.) You should all further this blessed work, by giving it countenance and approbation; there is no doubt, but while immorality hath so many patrons, *this way* will be every where spoken against, and they that attempt the restraint of lewd men, tho' in the most regular way, will incur the *ill word* and *ill will* of such, as either feel, or fear the just punishment of their crimes; and especially if they be necessitated to use what may seem less generous methods, tho' very lawful, for the more effectual promotion of their designed end, as well as for their own safety, or if there should be the least imprudent step taken; but do you rather cover their defects than aggravate them; it is no wonder, if when so filthy a house is sweeping, some offensive dust

dust should fly about, which is to be borne in order to cleansing. There are enough to animadvert and censure, take not their part; let *Baal* plead for himself, let prophaneness be its own advocate, be not you so much the friends of publicans and sinners.

(4.) LET all favour and further it with their *earnest prayers* to God for success. It is an important conflict between God's kingdom and the devil's: Oh, hold up your hands in fervent requests, while the dispute lasts. Favour O Lord, their righteous cause; prosper thou the work of their hands. Arise, and let thine enemies be scattered; and turn away transgression from our *Jacob*, that iniquity may fall, and never rise more. This should be every one's supplication, that wishes the honour of God.

II. SINCE God will honour them that honour him, let this greatly encourage those, who are engaged already in this honourable design, *God will honour you.* This consideration should make you renew your courage, and it will especially serve to counter-balance any scornful reproaches, which may be cast upon you for your forwardness in this matter: It is perhaps
not

SERM. not the least of Satan's artifices to make an odious representation of a good work, and by the fear of obloquy to affrighten us from pursuing it, it will be but his usual way, if he say, I will go forth and be a slandering *lying spirit* in the mouths of many against those, who are active in opposing his kingdom of darkness.

IT will therefore be no wonder, if such invidious suggestions as these should be heard, viz. That you are the *troublers of Israel*, 1 King. xviii. 16. as *Elijah* was slander'd by *Ahab* for the like reason; that you are base *hypocrites*, who would be counted *saints*, but will cheat and lye, and do any secret evil; and that you make a *gain* of this work, and the like; you know what sort of men they be, from whom such venom may come; they, who are in the service of the *father of lies*, must be allowed to make use of a little of *his art*. But under all these calumnies, I say to you in God's own words, *Fear not the reproaches of men, neither be afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them up like a garment*, Isa. li. 7, 8. they'll come to nought, so long as they are without a foundation: However, in the mean time you have this to oppose,

oppose, God will honour you, and therefore in contempt of all their reproaches, go on with resolution, saying with *David* in the like case; *Let them curse, but bless thou, Psal. cix. 28.*

YEA, whatever other difficulties may occur, let them only serve to make the triumph of our zeal more conspicuous; remember that you are soldiers of Jesus Christ, and therefore for shame must not flee for a little danger, you are bound to *endure some hardship, 2 Tim. ii. 3.* else you in effect say, that you will be soldiers for any thing but fighting; you'll give him any proof of your valour, except by exposing your selves to hazard: How ridiculous a profession would this be in a Christian, in these express terms? It is more becoming you to mount the breach, and to *stand in the gap.*

MY brethren, you have hitherto run well; Oh, that nothing may now hinder you, it would be very uncomfortable to thousands of them that love God, if your zeal should now decline, or if out of a regard to your own ease you should seek a discharge from this warfare, when at most it is but at the height of the conflict. To prevent which, I shall offer you
some

380 • *The suppression of public vice*

SERM. some serious motives, shewing you the evil
 XVII. consequences of such an unseasonable de-
 cension.

I. You will lose the happiest opportunity imaginable for public reformation. There are some great engines, which to put in motion is the greatest difficulty; and to begin well is the hardest part of some enterprizes; such a business is *public reformation*, which is very happily begun among us. The enemy, *viz.* all manner of iniquity came in as a flood, but the *spirit of the Lord hath lift up a standard against him*, Isa. lix. 19. unto which you and many others have repaired, who have marched up to the face of that bold enemy, so that he hath already made an halt; In and about this city you have had the cordial assistance of magistrates, to whom we may truly bear this testimony, that *they have not done the work of the Lord negligently, in withholding the sword from just punishment*, Jer. xlviii. 10. *in the margin*, as fearing the curse of God denounced against them who do. Your names have in great part been covered from reproach by their secrecy, or by their checks of such, as dare threaten and reproach you for your duty; many of different persuasions have united in the bands of love for this work, and
 some

some of rank and eminency, both in *church* and *state*, so that now the work is become both *easy* and *honourable*, yea, and *safe* too in comparison of what it hath been; you have gain'd with some labour and pains so much ground, that it is pity it should be lost again; after several thousand convictions of swearers and cursers, we can observe a sensible alteration in men's dialect, those throats, that lately were as *open sepulchres*, Rom. iii. 13, 14. sending forth a loathsome stench, are now, tho' not *painted sepulchres*, (by assuming any great appearance of piety) yet closed and shut, and so do not give that public offence, nor are such a common nuisance as formerly. How great an encouragement is this to proceed?

IF we compare these things with the circumstances, in which as to these matters we were not many years since, it may tempt us to use *Balaam's* expression of astonishment, *What hath God wrought?* Num. xxiii. 23. What a strange turn is here in the affairs of our *Israel*? And doubtless if you go on with your wonted zeal, and especially if the bulk of serious Christians, who wish you success, will promote it by their concurrent endeavours, we may hope for a more general triumph over
the

SERM. the kingdom of darkness: And can you
 XVII. think of losing such an opportunity as this, with
 any peace of mind? Verily, Sirs, I tell you, many have desired to see these things which you see, and could not see them: Many mourners are gone off the stage, who would with all their hearts and souls have put their hands to this blessed work, had there been but such laws, such magistrates, and such other encouragements as you meet with, but 'God did not honour them with such advantages, you are the men, whom he hath chosen to trust these choice talents with: Should you now after all lose this season, as great would be the guilt of neglecting such a price in your hands, so there would remain no hope of ever seeing such another; for when once laws of this nature are laid asleep by disuse, they are seldom awakened to purpose. —

BESIDES, your *zeal in this city* hath this singular advantage attending it, that it is likely to be influential upon the whole kingdom; for as all the blood in a man's body circulates through the heart, and is there invigorated, so most of the kingdom by turns have recourse to their *metropolis*, where they, who are slack in this work, may by your zeal
 be

be provoked to an imitation, and they, who are, I fear, too secure from punishment in the country, may meet with it here, which may be to their good and amendment: So that upon all accounts you especially are bound at this time to bestir your selves. And I may bespeak you, as *Hezekiah* did the *Levites* in a work of reformation too, *My sons be not you now negligent, for you hath the Lord chosen to serve him, 2 Chron. xxix. 11.*

2. WE may justly fear, that prophaneness would be more rampant than ever after this little check given to it; I doubt we should find, that the short contradiction it hath found from the late laws will have had but the same effect, as *St. Paul* says, God's law once had upon him, that is, only to irritate their lusts, *Rom. vii.* So that they will not only be as the dog in returning to their vomit, but also as the dog let loose, who is much the fiercer for having been chained: If once evil men burst these bonds, and defeat these present attempts, who can but tremble to think, with what improved insolence recovered wickedness will triumph and insult, when once it knows the smallness of your strength to oppose it? I may therefore allude to that of *St. Peter, 2 Epist. chap.*

SERM. *chap. ii. ver. 21.* and say; It had been better
 XVII. for you never to have begun than now to
 decline, better not to have fought, than to give
 iniquity the advantage of a victory by an un-
 timely retreat.

3. SUCH a declension of your zeal will
 betray an unsoundness in the principles, by
 which you have already been acted: You
 know some are apt to say your *zeal* is not *fire*
 kindled from heaven, but either from some
personal quarrel, or an hypocritical *affectation*
 of *esteem*, or at best but a childish fondness
 for a *novel* business, which lasts while it looks
 like a wonder, and then it becomes a weariness:
 now, should you indeed desist in your
 present circumstances, it would encrease the
 presumption. I hope that you are acted by
 the most noble springs, from an awful tenderness
 for the honour of God, grieved because
men keep not his law, *Pf. cxix. 136.* and from
 a compassionate concern both for *sinners* personal
 and the *nation's* common good, which you
 have the sagacity to apprehend the approaching
 ruin of, if iniquity go uncontroll'd; but if these
 have been your reasons, they will yet be of force
 with you: Is not the name of God and the
 public good as precious now as a few years
 since,

since, or have not such flagitious crimes the same hurtful influence and aspect upon both still? Oh, beware that you cast not a reproach upon all that you have done hitherto by a voluntary desertion of that cause, which lately you seemed so warm for; remember, that a right and just zeal hath this character, that it is *always*, and not only for a time, *Gal.* iv. 18.

4. THE unconquer'd obstinacy of wicked men will shame and reproach you. It was the glory of our Lord Jesus, that when he and the devil had such a stated conflict in the wilderness, the devil after many vain assaults retreated, and our Saviour kept the field as conqueror, *Mat.* iv. 11. But it will be your great reproach, if in the struggle of this day between the servants of these two chieftains, you that are on Christ's side should first faint and flee, especially when you have so much the advantage every way. The flagitious sinner hath God and his own conscience to contend with, as well as with you, he hath both future and present dangers to discourage him, so that upon the whole, it will be strange indeed, if he thinks his sins will bear his charges, or quit costs through disgrace and penalties here, and

C c through

SERM. through the horrors of an endless night of
XVII. darkness hereafter. But you have all things to
 encourage you, God and conscience, the civil
 authority, and joyful prospects of eternal re-
 wards; so that greater is your assistance, greater
 your encouragement every way, greater is He
 that is in you, than he that is in them; and shall
 they hold out, and you languish? You have
 every way the advantage of them, except you
 should want it in your own resolution.

5. **CONSIDER** the great danger that will
 follow, if thro' your neglect the work of re-
 formation should not be accomplish'd; What
 a train of calamities did *Eli's* remissness in pu-
 nishing his vile sons bring upon the *public* and
himself, and on his posterity after him? The
 enemy in God's habitation, the ark taken
 captive, and thirty thousand of *Israel* slain, is
 the next news we hear concerning the public,
Ch. iv. Then *Eli* himself dies the death of
 an unredeemed ass, he breaks his neck with a
 fall, after that evil tidings had broken his
 heart, his two wicked sons are slain in the
 battle, his daughter-in-law expires in her an-
 guish and grief, and all his posterity is left
 under the curse and sentence of rejection,
 which after the reigns of *Saul* and *David*,
 was

was executed by Solomon, 2 Kings ii. 27. the vengeance of God follows him after death it self in the generations to come; and all this for the *iniquity he knows of*, Ch. iii. 13. for that *emphatical*, that heavy sin, of not punishing scandalous offenders. What an awful warning should this be to magistrates and people, that they incur not the guilt of it! That they do not through negligence, or sloth, or a foolish tenderness omit to vindicate the honour of God from the scorn of profligate sinners! We might then hope to see shortly that universal restraint of such, as shall be both the *safety* and *ornament* of our land; but if you and others, if magistrates or people have no heart to do so much for God, who knows how soon the glory may depart from us, and we be forced to write *I-Chabod* on all our comforts; when the weight of some *additional curse* also may fall on them, who had special advantages for doing their duty, but did it not? Nay, yours after you may feel it, and the frowns of God be entail'd on your posterity, so provoking a sin is it not to rise up for God against Evil-doers, when he sounds an alarm to the conflict.

SERM.

XVII.

NAY, let me tell you this further, that your own personal piety in other relations may be no security to you against temporal judgments; *Eli* had himself a mighty reverence for God, with what humble submission doth he adore the justice of his threatning. *It is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his sight*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. His heart was set upon the ark of God; that word, *the ark of God is taken*, Ch. iv. 18. knock'd him down dead; yet for all this God's anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still.—No, far be it from me to let thee or thine continue in honour, on thee shall be all that contempt and shame, which thou should'st have poured on those lewd wretches, and because thou hast let them escape, thou shalt suffer.

6. BUT then, if on the other hand, you are sincere in these endeavours, how sweet and comfortable will the sense of it be at death, and for ever. It is but a poor inch of time, we have, in which to do our God *such service* as this, in heaven are no conflicts between saints and sinners; there is no warfare, all is triumph and peace, no trial of your courage and patient resolution; it is in this present life, if ever, we must honour God in this kind;

kind; and sure when you are going off the stage, conscience will inquire what hath been done for God and his interest? And the more of self-denial, the more pains, hazards, and discouragements you have gone through to serve his honour, the sweeter will your reflections on it be, and with greater confidence will you hope and pray for his salvation. Of this you may see an instance upon record in *David, Psal. xxvi. 24.* compared with *ver. 9.* *I have not sat with vain persons, I have hated the congregation of evil doers: O gather not thou my soul with sinners, &c. q. d.* Thou Lord, who art the omniscient witness, and shortly wilt be the final judge of all my ways, knowest that I never loved either the ways or the company of profane sinners; I have always appeared against them, I have checked and discountenanced them; they have been a grief to me, and I have been an awe and restraint upon them; now therefore I pray, let not me, when I die, go with them, with whom I could not endure to live; we were never delightful associates in this world, O never let me be their sorrowful companion in the next; and how certain accomplishment must such requests, so reasonable and so suitable

have?

SERM. have? You shall go, not to such as you grieve
 XVII. ved at and abhorr'd, but to such as you
 have loved, where none shall either offend
 God, or grieve you by their sin and folly;
 where shall be no more reforming work to
 do, because no more sin or blemish; no more
 conflict, because no enemies of God; no more
 danger or hazard in God's service, because none
 to oppose; where all difficulties and dis-
 couragements shall be left behind to poor mor-
 tals, that shall follow after you complaining
 and groaning through these *black tents of Ke-*
dar, when you are free from the woes and
 vexations thereof.

AND then my brethren, then will come
 the crowns and thrones, the robes and palms
 of victory to adorn them, who have with
 greatest zeal and labour striven against sin and
 Satan for God and holiness: Oh, who would
 want these comfortable thoughts upon a dy-
 ing bed! How much better is this, than to
 have conscience chase thee out of this world
 into eternity with such upbraiding clamours,
 as go thou slothful unprofitable servant, thou
 cumberer of the ground, thou despised ves-
 sel, in which thy God had no pleasure to
 make any use of!

BUT

BUT then, that you may reflect thus comfortably upon your endeavours, you must be directed by such rules as these :

SERM.

XVII.

1. BEWARE that none of you be guilty of wounding the honour of God your selves, while you pretend to repair the injuries it receives from others ; let no man think to compound for any indulged crimes of his own by being severe upon those of others ; you have many observers, let it be your care to disappoint them that watch for your halting ; the wicked *Chams* of the age will be glad to see the *Noahs*, the promoters of righteousness, drunk ; remember that they who *reprove the works of darkness* must have no fellowship with them, Eph. v. 11. You will much more freely throw the first stone at others, when you are without such sins your selves.

2. SEE that God's honour be the end directly designed by you ; go not along with others merely for company, when you think not why, that it may not be said of you, as of him, whom God ordained to be the rod of his anger to a sinful nation, that you indeed have done what greatly honours God, *howbeit, you mean it not so*, Isa. x. 7. An explicate vigorous intention to serve your Ma-

SERM. ker's glory is an essential part of such more im-
 XVII. mediate service.

3. SHEW your selves satisfied with God's honour for your reward, being far from a proud affectation of human applause, or any nauseous discovery of self-esteem. Would it not be a sad exchange, if God should say, you have your reward? To lose the approbation and favour of heaven for the mistaken good opinion of poor worms. Let then the most unaffected humility shew, that you love not the praise of men so much as the praise of God. Let no man have occasion so to interpret your carriage, as if the language of it were like that of vain-glorious *Jehu*, *Come, see my zeal for the Lord*.

IT is then an happy case indeed, when a man's face shines, as *Moses's*, with the lustre of eminent perfections, and himself knows it not, or at least covers them with a veil of modesty: While you endeavour to be as the lights of the world, be like the bright flaming taper, which at once casts a splendid light before others, and yet an obscure shade about it self.

4. SEE that the methods you use in this work, be as suited to the honour of God, as
 the

the matter of your zeal is. I take this for granted, that you are acting in the safest cause in the world, you are not prosecuting any for differences of judgment in religion, or matters of conscience; in such a case, men's misguided zeal oft makes those woful mistakes, spoken of by Christ, *John xvi. 2.* that I should fear to wish you *God speed*. But yours is the most unexceptionable cause, *viz.* To expose to punishment those profane practices, which no conscience was ever so perverse, as seriously to espouse: Who ever heard any cry out in bitter agonies, that they had not sworn, nor committed whoredom, nor contemned the Lord's day more?

TAKE care, that your means be as warrantable for the discovery of such offenders; you know it is spoken to God's honour, that he *tempts no man to evil, Jam. i. 13.* neither let any say, he was tempted of you: As I doubt not but you count it a wicked thing to provoke a man to passion in hopes that he will swear and curse, so should you in other cases be afraid to lead any into temptation: It is not honourable to kindle those impure flames, which you would quench, and which cannot burn the least while without offence

SERM. offence to God, nor is it safe to give poison in
 XVII. hopes of an antidote; besides it may prove a
 dangerous temptation to your selves, and you
 may fall into the snare you laid for others,
 or at least it may bring you under the re-
 proach and suspicion of an evil design, by
 such as shall refuse your bait, and so you may
 get a blot not easily to be wiped out.

5. LASTLY, Be greatly concerned, that
 you can honour God no more in this mat-
 ter, especially if your endeavours should not
 in the main prove successful: O grieve un-
 der it *for God's sake*, that his great name
 must yet suffer contempt, his worship be de-
 spised, and his laws trampled under foot, and
 you cannot help it; *For the nation's sake*,
 that when God would purge them, they
 would not be purged. Mourn over a people,
 that hate to be reformed, for whom what
 will remain but utter destruction, of which
 incorrigibleness in sin is a desperate omen? It
 is said of these sons of *Eli*, that they would
 not hearken to their father's reproof, *because*
the Lord would destroy them; And for your
own sakes, that God would not honour you
 with success in so noble a service.

BUT

BUT to conclude, if on the other hand you do prevail, (as I would by no means despair of it,) then will it be God's glory to have his name held reverend, and his law made honourable: It will be the glory of *our land* to be called an habitation of holiness; the glory of *our city*, that it is a faithful city, *full of judgment, in which righteousness lodges*, *Isa. i. 21.* yea, the glory of *our prince*, that in his days we were delivered, not only from popery and slavery, but from a terrible contagion of open profaneness, and that in his time righteousness and peace kiss each other.

AND it will be the glory of all you, who have been the active instruments of this, for having honoured God, he will honour you. And the shame shall be to none, but them, who deserve no better, and for whom the most charitable prayer we can put up is that of *David*, *Fill thou their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Lord*, *Psal. lxxxiii. 16.*

SERMON XVIII.

Funeral Consolations.

BEING THE FIRST SERMON

Preach'd by the AUTHOR after the Death of

His WIFE, Mrs. *Esther Emlyn* :

Who Died Octob. 13. 1701. in the Thirtieth
Year of her Age.

The PREFACE.

WHETHER that Grecian law, which prohibited the nearest kindred to make the panegyric upon the deceased, was reasonable or not, I am not concerned to inquire; since it is not the design of the following discourse to enlarge on the praise of the dead, but to speak for the consolation of the living.

Indeed

SERM. *Indeed I am very apprehensive, that I in-*
 XVIII. *dulge my affection to the memory of the deceased,*
more than I consult my own reputation, in
publishing this plain discourse; which was
composed under the impressions of great sor-
row, yet such, as could never pretend to boast
of those effects, which in the poet are ascribed
to the eloquent grief of Ulysses:

———— Dolor ipse disertum Fecerat.

Ovid.

Nevertheless I must own, that I had proba-
 bly done it sooner, had I not been diverted by
 many troubles; the issue of which has been such,
 as has not only given me more leisure to review
 this sermon, but also more occasion often to re-
 tire to a serious contemplation of the matters
 therein contain'd.

What my sufferings (for a principle of
 judgment) have been, or for what cause I suf-
 fer as an evil-doer, even unto bonds, I intend
 not here to complain. It suffices me to leave
 my complaint with God, whom I desire to
 serve according to my best understanding; and
 if I may but please him, the judge and giver
 of the prize, I shall be less anxious for the
 applause

applause of spectators, who must themselves be judged also. SERM.
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But as to that dispensation of providence, which occasioned this discourse; I do therein, with great reverence and satisfaction adore the righteous wisdom of the supreme Lord of life and death, by whose appointment, according to the prophet's observation, Isa. lvii. 1. righteous and merciful men are taken away from the evil to come. For considering what was in the womb of providence, and so near to its birth, I cannot but reckon it an apparent design of mercy to her, who is deceased, that she should be carried into the quiet harbour, before so furious a tempest did arise, which might have made too cruel impressions on a disposition so very gentle and tender: But she was gathered into her grave in peace, that she might not behold it. Moreover by such a rebuke, so adapted to strike at the root of all earthly love and delight, the all-wise God might greatly prepare him, who was to survive, for better enduring his approaching trials; since thereby, neither the prosperity nor adversity of this world could be any great temptation to one, who had less reason than ever to be fond of this life; and so loud an admonition never to seek

SERM. *his contentment on this side God and heaven.*
 XVIII. Lord, what wait I for? my hope is only in
 thee, *Pf. xxxix. 7.*

I believe there are but few Christians, whose mountain stands so strong, or whose present prosperity is so undisturbed, that they do not sometimes feel it needful to turn their eyes towards heaven for support, and to use their faith and hope, as the only remaining springs of sure consolation; and happy are they, who can so rejoice! Who in the midst of storms and clouds below can behold a calm and serene heaven over their heads, and by faith penetrate into a cloudless horizon above, when all underneath is darkness and horror. Who look on the right hand and refuge fails, no man cares for them; but yet can add, O Lord, thou art my portion and refuge, Pf. cxlii. 5.

*And tho' there may be other motives more weighty, yet hardly any thing that more sensibly and easily entices our thoughts into the invisible world, than this consideration, that so many of our valuable friends are withdrawn within the veil: We do at least imagine, that we thereby maintain some farther converse with them: And indeed, if (as some say) our souls be only Thought, then we have a way to
 be*

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be still with them, as oft as by intense contemplation we can raise and wind our souls into that heavenly society, into which they are incorporate. This is a sort of silent and profitable converse, which none can confine us from; and tho' it may seem but imaginary, yet it is of real influence, and very preparative to a more intimate and sensible society with them hereafter.

This will naturally lead us to converse with God, to whom their spirits are returned, and to whom they are so nearly united; which was the solacing entertainment of our Lord Jesus in his forsaken state, and because of which he accounted himself to be not alone. And such was the sense an excellent heathen had of this great privilege, that he nobly triumphs over the fears of a supposed banishment from this consideration, that in any country he shou'd be able to converse with God. Quocunque abiero, ibi erit Sol, ibi Luna, &c. ibi colloquia cum Deo *. Such converse with God and his saints tends greatly to inflame our desires after heaven: One can scarcely be on the Mount with such company, and not say, 'Tis good to be here, or rather to be nearer to them.

D d

And

* Arr. Epiet. l. 3. c. 22. ἢ π, δ; θεὸς ὁμιλία.

SERM. XVIII. *And since we apply our minds to these things with a better relish, when earthly conversation is least tempting, we have great reason to esteem it a merciful stratagem of infinite wisdom, when by disturbing the ease of this present life he endears to us the hopes of the future, and reconciles us to death as the way to it: for as prosperity makes life, so adversity makes death more easy, which perhaps is an equal or greater kindness; I am sure it is so, if it makes us die more preparedly into that world, where we hope for better usage.*

Indeed it is most fit, that so liberal a rewarder, as the great God will be, should appoint us to what trials he pleases; and the temper most worthy to be aspired after by a christian is so to cherish his vigorous desires of heaven, as not to become impatient of the business or conflicts of the present life, by which he may any way serve his master's honour; and in so doing, it is a pleasure to consider, that the sharper his trials are, the brighter shall the glory be that will reward him; and also, that he is following them, who by faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises: With whom he hopes to be joined again, not as companions in tribulation and
patience,

THE PREFACE.

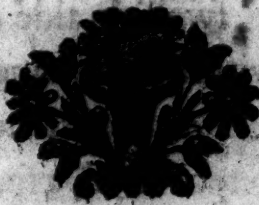
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patience, but in the delights of endless praise, and joyful love.

Let me only desire the reader seriously to improve Job's question, Man gives up the ghost, and where is he? Job. xiv. 20. What is become of him whom we lately saw? Whither are they got ere this, who left our world a few days since? To what mansions? What work? What company? What have they seen? What have they felt? O amazing turn, that will soon be our own! When others will ask these questions of us, which will be seriously answered upon ourselves. O moment of all moments! most desirable! and yet most terrible! How surely wilt thou soon shut the door of time upon us all, and put us to shift, as we can, for eternity! eternity!

Felices animæ! quibus est fortuna peracta.



JOHN xiv. 28.

If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said I go to the Father: For my Father is greater than I.

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I PRESUME 'tis unknown to very few of this assembly, under what mournful circumstances I now appear in this place; or what that sorrowful occasion is, which in the choice of these words I have regard to, and which (by a due consideration of them) I desire to be relieved under.

THE words are a very proper lenitive for assuaging the immoderate sorrow of Christians upon the death of their lamented pious friends; a time when nature melts into tears, overwhelmed with a swelling tide of grief, which is hardly kept within the bounds either of reason or of grace. Alas! when our withering gourds are smitten of God, especially if with a sudden and early stroke, we are ready to think with *Jonah*, *We do well to be angry*, or to fret and pine: On this grievous occasion we
hear

hear little else but the voice in *Ramah, Lamentation and weeping, Rachel weeping for her children* (or friends) *and refusing to be comforted, because they are not.* So that it must be a very powerful argument indeed that can charm the tumultuous spirit of a deep mourner into a calm moderation of his anguish.

AND if there be any argument in the world sufficient in the case, no doubt but our Saviour has chosen it here, who urges his disciples with a mighty dissuasive from too much grief; and this taken from that which was the very root and spring of it, *viz.* their unfeigned love to him.

THE case was in short this; Our Lord *Jesus* was now about to die, and was taking his farewell of his disciples; *Yet, says he, a little while and ye shall not see me;* and again, *Whither I go ye cannot come,* John xiii. 33. Upon these melancholy tidings, their hearts were sore troubled: no wonder if they were loth to part with so kind a friend, or to lose so dear a master; such a wise guide and profitable teacher; especially since they were like to be left in a very forlorn case, as a poor naked prey to the rage and hatred of a blind and malicious generation. They seemed con-

SERM. tent to die along with him, if that might be,
 XVIII. *Why cannot I follow thee? I will lay down my*
life for thee, John xiii. 37. was the language
 of one and all of them; but they could not
 bear the thoughts of a disconsolate separation.

OUR Lord seeing them thus dejected endeavours to cheer and hearten them. *Let not your hearts be troubled,* Joh. xiv. 1. or don't take on and grieve so, but hearken to what I have to say for your consolation: And then he applies several arguments to this purpose, viz. from his design in going to *prepare a place,* where he and they might for ever live together; *I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also,* Job. xiv. 3. A reviving consideration! that they should one day meet their dear friend again, and that their separation was to be but for a while. Well, but for all this, death makes such a vast distance between friends, and we know so little of another state, that the disciples seemed to doubt, whether ever they should meet again, if once they parted: They knew not whither he was going, nor the way to follow him: *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we*

we know the way? ver. 5. In answer to this *Christ* tells them, he was the *way, the truth, and the life*; i. e. that the sure way to follow him to heaven, was by a due observance of his doctrine and precepts, as being the ambassador and representative of God to men to deliver his mind on earth: For this he desires their belief, at least, if they would not take *his word*, they might be satisfied from *his works*, which shewed the *Father* did dwell in him, ver. 11. Then he argues from the great advantage they would reap by his removing to heaven, to intercede for them, and to send down the *Holy Spirit* upon them.

BUT lest all this should not quiet them, he has one argument more in reserve in these words of my text, and that the most moving that can be; in which he desires them, if they loved him, that they would not so much mourn as rejoice at his departure; intimating that he would take it for a proof of their love to him, if they would mourn less. They thought doubtless, they shewed love to him in grieving for his death; and it may seem strange, that Christ should put such a contrary interpretation upon their friendly sor-

SERM. row, or should require so unnatural a thing
 XVIII. of them, as to rejoice for his departure: What,
 (might they think) shall we rejoice at so amiable a friend's removal from us? Or can we be glad that we shall see his face here no more? No, 'tis impossible; we have no heart, no disposition to be glad in this sad season: therefore he adds a reason to back this great paradox, *viz.* because he was going to the Father; that is, to be rewarded and glorified by him who was greater than himself, and so was able to exalt him; which could not be without leaving them: Therefore says he, *If ye love me, ye should rejoice, because I told you I was going to the Father.* Hence I lay down this proposition:

That true love to our departed pious friends, should prompt us to rejoice at their translation hence to heaven.

I KNOW indeed there were peculiar reasons why the disciples should rejoice at Christ's departure to the Father, *viz.* because by it he should do them more beneficial service, than by his stay. *It is expedient, says he, that I go away: For if I go not, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you, Joh. xvi. 7.* But these are not
 the

the motives our Lord Jesus argues from in the text; this were to argue from their own interest, or love to themselves; whereas he argues here from their pure love to him; supposing themselves were to receive no advantage, but present loss by his death, yet for his sake they should rejoice at his happiness in going to the *Father*. So that it is an argument as truly applicable to the case of any other holy friend's departure, when on our part there is real love and affection to them, as the spring; and on their part it can be said truly, That they go to the *Father*, as the ground and matter of this joy.

IN speaking to this point, I shall *First*, Shew the meaning of our Saviour's words. *Secondly*, The force of his argument.

I. I shall consider the meaning of our Saviour in these words, both negatively, and positively.

1. *Negatively*; (1.) It was not Christ's meaning, by these words, to say, that there was no real love at the bottom of his disciples great sorrow for his death; or that there was no true love, where there was not visible joy on this occasion. That would have been an hard interpretation indeed of their friendly

SERM. friendly grief: They knew it was from love
 XVIII. that their grief sprang; that if they had not
 loved much, they had sorrowed less: they
 were ready to make the appeal to him, *Thou
 knowest that we love thee.* Indeed he saw so
 much love in their sorrow, that it made him
 arguethus with them; *If, or seeing ye love me,*
&c. q. d. I see you love me, and are expressing
 your tender affection to me by your mournful
 countenance and words, which shew your re-
 gret at my departure; since then love so pre-
 vails and works, let me argue with you from
 that prevailing passion without extinguishing
 or discouraging it; let me direct it into a
 right course, and then that love, which now
 makes you grieve, shall much more make
 you to rejoice. He does not question, but
 supposes their love in these words.

IN like manner, neither must it be said,
 that there is no love to our departed friends,
 whose decease we lament with a flood of
 tears: 'tis past the power of any man in the
 world to convince us of that; for we feel
 our love as plainly as we do our grief: And
 indeed our grief is nothing but our disap-
 pointed unsatisfied love; nay, it was from our
 Lord's own weeping over dead *Lazarus*, that

it

it was said, *Behold how he loved him!* John xi. 36. 'Tis love makes us feel the pain of an heart-rending separation between us and an amiable friend: 'Tis love makes us miss the wonted desire of our eyes, its once so pleasant object: Why else do men weep chiefly for relations and friends whom they love, if love do not influence grief?

(2.) Nor does our Lord intend to intimate, that all such sorrow for our holy friends departure is an unlawful or unbecoming expression of our love. Doubtless he was not displeased to see his disciples tenderly affected with his removal, and that he was like to die lamented of some. He, who shed tears at *Lazarus's* grave with sighs and deep groans, cannot be thought to forbid them wholly at his own: therefore he does not chide his disciples with angry reproaches, as tho' they were wholly in the wrong, but softly and tenderly reasons the matter with them in gentle persuasions, *Let not your hearts be troubled*; as rather pitying their sorrow, than altogether condemning it. He who knows our frame will indulge the weakness of our frail natures a little in this thing, and will allow

SERM. low us to pay a small tribute of tears to the
 XVIII. precious memory of an endeared friend ; and
 to utter our parting farewell with an unusual
 accent of sorrow. Why should we not weep,
 when we are sure we shall see their faces no
 more? since for that very reason the Christians
 of *Asia* wept sore at *St. Paul's* leaving them;
 and they of *Cæsarea* on the prospect of his dy-
 ing, (tho' somewhat remote,) did weep, both
 to the breaking of their own hearts and his
 also, *Acts* xxi. 13. Indeed that same Apostle,
 who seems to speak most against sorrow for
 the death of Christian friends, aims not at more
 than to make some abatement of the usual
 excesses of grief among the Pagans. *Sorrow*
not as others, that have no hope, 1. *Thef.* iv.
 13. How that was we may learn in *Deut.*
 xiv. 12. it was with violent rage, like mad-
 men, under the tyranny of a passion, to whose
 excesses they abandoned themselves without
 check.

ESPECIALLY where the relation is near-
 est, (I mean the conjugal) and the separation
 most violent, there God will permit us to
 shew the deeper resentment, because he al-
 lows greater affection. He that requires such
 love to the *wife of our bosom*, especially when
 the

the wife of our youth too, as to bid us, *Rejoice with the wife of thy youth, let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe; be thou ravished with her love always*, Prov. v. 18. Again, *Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved his church*, Eph. v. 25. And again, *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies*, ver. 28. He, I say, knows well that so much love cannot (according to the make of human nature) but end in great grief at the dissolution of that near relation.

AND tho' the ancient patriarchs were men very renown'd for their mortification to the comforts of this world, being truly pilgrims on the earth, yet methinks, I find holy *Jacob* expressing such a sensible sorrow for the death of his *Rachel* many years after, as shews that wound was not yet quite healed to his dying day: *As for me*, says he, *when I came from Padan-aram, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan by the way, when yet there was but a little way to Ephrath, and I buried her there*, Gen. xlviii. 7. He bemoans himself under the sense of his loss, *as for me*, or that which sticks by me, in a very sensible remembrance still; that which I am greatly concerned at, and cannot forget, &c. *as for me*, or as to my sorrowful part,
Rachel

SERM. *Rachel died by me*; and there I buried my greatest earthly delight. It is no unusual thing with good men, to lament under such circumstances: *Ezekiel's* case was particular, he was forbid to mourn for his wife on purpose to amaze the people with his strange carriage, that they might ask the meaning of so monstrous and unusual a thing, as not to mourn for the taking away the desire of his eyes, *Ezek. xxiv. 16, 21, 22.* and it was to represent the greatness of their approaching calamity, that would be so great as to swallow up all private occasions of grief.

MORE especially may it quicken our sorrow, when we apprehend such a stroke to be the punishment of our iniquities, which withhold and withdraw good things from us; when we have reason to put that interpretation upon God's hand in the death of our dear relations, which she did on the death of her child, that it was *to bring our sins to remembrance*, *1 Kings xvii. 18.* in this case grace falls in with nature, and by uniting their two streams the torrent of grief becomes the more violent: for who can look upon his dear friend, whom he has pierced and slain, and not mourn bitterly? But,

2. *Positively*, That which Christ intends here, is, SERM.
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(1.) THAT at least his disciples should mix some joy with their sorrow for his death; he does not say, *If ye loved me, ye would not grieve, but, ye would rejoice*; there should be some joy to allay and moderate their sorrow. And indeed as these two easily consist in the same breast, so there is a proper occasion for this mixture and confusion of our passions in the death of our pious friends; because in such dispensations, there is both a bright and cloudy side, the one in their gain, the other in our great loss; *so that in the multitude of our troubled thoughts within us, there are comforts that may delight our souls*, Ps. xciv. 19. and with David, we should have our hearts tuned to *sing of mercy and judgment* at once, Ps. ci. 1.

(2.) HE intends to intimate, that their rejoicing should be more than their sorrow upon this occasion: for tho' he speaks not *exclusively*, in requiring them to rejoice, yet he speaks *comparatively* at least, that they should rather rejoice than mourn; joy should be our principal exercise, so that if it be inquired what our frame and carriage is under

SERM. under such a providence, it may be said we
 XVIII. rather rejoice and triumph, than are dejected.
 True indeed, an external wanton mirth in
 jollity and laughter would be a monstrous de-
 formity; but rational joy and satisfaction is
 a comely christian temper, that well comports
 with the gravity of such an occasion.

3. HE suggests further, that to rejoice
 on such occasions is the most regular and
 noble exercise of love to such departed friends;
 'tis the most genuine and regular exercise of
 love, since the nature of love is to incline us
 to a joyful congratulation of the prosperity of
 its indared object: and 'tis then it carries
 most evidences of a love unfeign'd, when we
 rejoice in our friends welfare, tho' no bene-
 fit (but rather damage) redounds to us there-
 by.

TO say the truth, inordinate grief for the
 translation of a friend to heaven is no proof
 at all of any love we bear to them, because
 'tis not their case affects us, but our own: so
 that all which can be said of us in justice is,
 that we love ourselves very well, whatever we
 do our friends; yea, much better than we
 love them, since our own lesser loss causes a
 trouble, which the thoughts of their much
 greater

greater gain cannot ballance ; so that we are. SERM.
liable to that reproachful challenge, *Is this thy* XVIII.
kindness to thy friend? Our cheerful satisfac-
tion will better declare that.

AND it is far the most *noble*, as well as
most genuine exercise of love ; it is a poor or-
dinary frame to mourn for our dead, as ari-
sing from mere sensitive nature : One needs no
improvement of mind in order to this ; there
needs neither philosophy nor christianity, vir-
tue nor religion, to teach us this low lesson ;
but to rejoice in their happy change, to be
glad that they are laid in a bed of everlasting
rest, whilst we suffer the loss of their pleasant
society, this is generous and truly noble love ;
this is such an ingenuous greatness of mind, as
is only the product of divine faith and chri-
stian hope, which regulates our love, and
raises it to so high a pitch, as nothing below
the grace of God and the light of the gospel
can advance it to: *So much for the explication.*

II. I COME next, under the second gene-
ral, to shew the force of our Saviour's rea-
son, by which he justifies his inference, *viz.*
that if they loved him, they would rejoice.
Now the reason, on which he grounds this, is

SERM. in these words, *Because I go to the father,*
 XVIII. *who is greater than I; i. e. to one who could,*
 and would exalt and reward him : *q. d.* I am
 going to be happy and glorious, to a blessed
 place, and blessed company, where I shall
 have no need of your pity or sorrow, and
 therefore on this consideration you should
 greatly abate it.

Now allowing for the difference in the
 glorious rewards and exaltation of our master,
 and of his servants, the reason may be extend-
 ed to others, and has its force in the death of
 any pious friends ; for they also *go to the Fa-*
ther : the spirit goes to God who gave it, not
 only as the spirit of the wicked, *viz.* to be dis-
 posed of by him ; but the holy christian's spi-
 rit goes to him, as to his liberal rewarder, to
 see him, and enjoy him, to dwell and con-
 verse with him in that blessed acquaintance,
 which shall never be broken off to eternity ;
 for they go to the same place with their Sa-
 viour, *where I am, there shall ye also be,* and
 shall have a mansion in the same Father's
 house, *Job. xiv. 3.*

Now let us consider what there is implied
 in all this, that should raise joy upon the de-
 parture of our holy friends in all that rightly
 love

love them. Now there are three arguments or grounds of joy which arise hence.

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1. This implies that our pious and dear friends, tho' dead, are not utterly extinct and lost; for they only *go to the Father*: they pass from one place and company to another, but are not sunk into the black abyss of non-existence. It was but a slender consolation, which the Heathen philosophers oft offered to their mourners, in telling them, that tho' dead men enjoy no good, yet neither do they feel any evil. Indeed, supposing them lost in an utter extinction, 'tis all the comfort we have left concerning the best men; whereas we can only allow that to be true of the body; this having lost the active animating principle, is neither miserable nor happy; now like an useless idol, it has eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear, and feet but cannot walk; it has lost its beautiful air and regular motions, and all its sensations of pleasure and pain. But we believe better than so of the invisible principle, that this has still the pleasure of life and activity about nobler objects: that immortal tenant is only removed from a crazy cottage of clay to a more excellent dwelling *not made with hands*.

SERM. XVIII. This indeed is better tidings than what sense reports; that represents them as lost for ever, but faith tells us, they are but translated: *the one* says, *Joseph* is utterly devoured by an evil beast, and now is not; by *the other* we understand he is safe and well in another land. This is so mighty a lenitive to our grief, (which we owe chiefly to the gospel of Jesus Christ,) that the Apostle sticks not to say, that *he has even abolished death* by making this discovery of a future life, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. Here then is matter of joy to think that our friends are not perished in the frightful shipwreck; but as we have sometimes seen the same boisterous waves, that break the vessel, do but waft the passenger over to the safe shore, so death has landed them safe on another coast, whose frail bodily vessel is dash'd in pieces. No wonder if *Rachel* refuse to be comforted, if she think her dead children are not in being; but blessed be God, it is not so, for all, even the dead live to God, tho' not with us; they live, yea and they act, and think, and love more busily than ever, *Luke* xx. 38.

IT is with them as with the sun, who at evening leaves our horizon under disconsolate darkness; and some very foolish persons may think

Funeral consolations.

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think its glory buried and extinguished, when it is only gone to the other hemisphere, and there shines with as much beauty and brightness as ever. Methinks this consideration should make us say as old *Jacob*, when on good tidings of *Joseph's* welfare he began to revive, *It is enough, he (or she) is alive*; Gen. xlv. 28. It is enough to put us into a transport of joy, to read what our blessed Lord said for the support of *Martha*, when grieved for her brother *Lazarus's* death, *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die*, John xi. 25, 26. Well then, we learn from our Saviour's argument here, that the surviving Christian has this to say for his comfort, that his dead friends are not rased out of being; they have shot the gulph, but are not lost in it. Be not then terrified at their death; it has kill'd the body, but could not kill the soul.

2. This consideration that they are gone to the Father implies, that they are unspeakably more happy, where they now are, than they were, or would have been, if they had continued here. This Christ plainly intends in the words, viz. that he

SERM. should change *for the better*. 'Tis better be-
 XVIII. ing with God above, than with their friends
 on earth: because,

(I.) THEY are hereby delivered from our (and once their) troubles. They, who pass out of our *Egypt*, do certainly go out of a place of great bondage, and shake off a mighty load of cares and fears, and many uneasy burdens, which being in this tabernacle they groaned under. The occasions of grief here are so many, either originally, or by sympathy our own, that of most who are departing hence may that account be given, *These are they, who came out of great tribulation: they are gone off from an accursed earth, doom'd to bear briers and thorns to the torment of man. Their life was but a tragedy fill'd with sighs and groans, not counterfeit but real; how many provocations to grief or anger fill'd their eyes with tears, and their mouths with complaints? One while crying with the Shunamite's child, My head! my head! and anon with the Prophet, O my bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart, Jer. iv. 19.*

BUT now there are no thorns in the flesh to disquiet them; they are no longer harass'd
 with

with painful diseases or feeble sickness, with faintings or weariness, or with ungrateful remedies, that could neither prevent the frequent alarms, nor the one fatal stroke of death. Nay, 'tis a great part of their deliverance, that they have now no frightful views of approaching dreadful death; the king of terrors, with his train of black attendants, will return to them no more; they are got out of his dominion, they have felt his sting, they have shot the amazing gulph, have no more dying groans and sobs to fetch, nor parting agonies to fear, which terrify us mortals, who have that conflict yet to go through. These melancholy things with them are over and past; now the weary body is at rest in its bed; the grave is a quiet sleeping place, where all is hush and still, peace and silence; *the clods of that valley are sweet unto them,* Job. xxi. 33. There they have found a quiet harbour, where they have unladen all their burdens and sorrows; there they have buried their cares and anxieties; there they have lodged an aching head, or tortured bowels, or pained limbs; that was the goal, at which their wearisome race and pilgrimage had its happy end.

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NOR are they liable now to those spiritual sorrows, which once disquieted their tender souls; they have no doubts of the love of God, for they know and feel it abundantly; no more an aching heart about their eternal condition, saying, *What shall I do to be saved?* for they have heard, *Well done good and faithful servant, enter into thy Master's joy.* They have no more despondent suspicion of their own sincerity towards God, no lamented indispositions to his holy service, no spots nor wrinkles to render them a shame or burden to themselves; they fetch no more such deep sighs as that, *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* Rom. vii. 24. They have no more such bitter challenges as those, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why so disquieted within me?* Psal. xlii. 11. They are satisfied with God's likeness.

THEY see no abominations in that holy land, to cause them to sigh and mourn; the evil serpent enters not their paradise, to tempt any to sin: their righteous souls are not vexed with seeing or hearing any filthy or miserable thing: no groans of the oppressed, nor cries of the persecuted; no tragical relations
from

from our *Aceldamia*; no reports of this great slaughter, and that mighty desolation, which make up the history of this earth, and gain the applauses of the theatre; no such doleful tidings, nor mournful spectacles disturb their quiet felicity.

MUCH less are they grieved for those consequences of their death, that now trouble us; it grieves not them that they have quitted our world or company; they are not sorry they have left their worldly possessions and estates, that the pleasant places of their habitation must know 'em no more; it wounds not them, that they have left their once dearest friends in mournful sorrow, crying after them, *My Father! My Father!* 2 Kings ii. 12. It troubles not them, that their once so beloved offspring are become exposed orphans in the world; no, as *their sons may come to honour, and they know it not; so may they be brought low, and they perceive it not*, Job xiv. 21. They mind not these petty troubles of ours; it grieves not them, (however it may us) that their comely countenance is turn'd to ghastliness and deformity, and their flesh become an habitation of worms, that once had a more noble inhabitant; they are not moved at lying
in

SERM. in the dark and solitary vault among the dead,
XVIII. nor at the gnawing of those worms that will
 die. We mention these things, or ruminate
 upon them with melancholy thoughts, but
 so do not they.

NOR have they any other sorrows in
 exchange for these of the lower world;
 no, they have no more any pain, or sorrow,
 or crying; *they shall hunger no more, nei-*
ther thirst any more, &c. Rev. xxi. 4. *For*
the lamb shall feed them, and lead them
to the fountain of living waters; and God
shall wipe all tears from their eyes, chap. vii.
 16, 17. In a word, 'tis their jubilee, 'tis the
 year of their eternal release from all evil, in
 which they have not only cast off their bonds
 and fetters, but have also put off their armour;
 have laid by the *shield of faith* and *helmet of*
hope, and are sat down in everlasting perfect
 peace, in the *land of praise and joy,* into
 which they have carried no discordant com-
 plaints. Is not this a great motive to our joy,
 when they are gone? Why should we grieve
 much for them, who grieve not at all them-
 selves? Or why should rivers of tears run
 down our eyes, when God has wiped away
 all tears from theirs for ever?

(2.) By going to the Father they enter into exceeding great joy; they have not only left *Egypt*, but they have got into the good land of promise: they have not indeed all the felicity intended for them; there are some ornaments and glories, which they must not put on nor wear till the *marriage-day of the lamb*; but yet the lines are fallen to them in pleasant places, and they have already a *goodly heritage*; enough to warrant us to say, that *henceforth they are blessed*, because some reward of their works has followed them at present, *Rev. xiv. 13.* They are got into their father's house, to their best and dearest friend; he, who at their penitent return to him, (when they said, *I will go to my father, &c. Luke xv.*) was so ready to meet them with compassionate embraces, to call for *the ring and fatted calf*, and to assure them of his gracious acceptance on earth, has doubtless with inexpressible kindness welcom'd them to their everlasting home. He who before gave them the earnest, has now given part of the inheritance; in his good pleasure he has given them the kingdom; their master has bid them *enter into his joy*, and they have put

SERM. put on the garments of praise, for the spirit
 XVIII. of heaviness.

THEY are gone to a blessed place, to a paradise of eternal delights; are got nearer to the heaven of heavens, the royal palace of the king of glory, where the high and lofty ONE dwells in inaccessible light, and fills that temple with his magnificent train; where he has erected a throne, on which infinite majesty for ever resides, at whose dazzling brightness the seraphim hide their faces, and pay their homage with the greatest veneration; where infinite beauty unveils its face to open view, where it amazes, ravishes, and overcomes myriads of attentive spectators; its attractive charms draw and fasten all their eyes so, that they never look off from that *amiable object*, they always behold him, Mat. xviii. 10. where they need no books of devotion to warm their hearts; one view of his ineffable glory is instead of a thousand arguments, and wraps them up in the flames of ardent admiring love.

THEY are gone to blessed company, where all are most holy, most wise, good and happy; a society made up of the choicest and most excellent of the earth, whom God has
 been

been gathering together out of all the generations past, and has made much more excellent than they were; all of them kings and priests, and sons of God; all knit together in the indissoluble bands of truest love, which is ever cherish'd by the engaging charms of intimate endearing converse; so that they are dearer to each other, than ever our friends were to us, or we to them on earth. Oh! what a surprizing change is this to them, who from a world made desolate by prevailing rage and malignity find themselves got into the very element of love! How then can it be but well with them! for they are gone to *Mount Sion, the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*, Heb. xii. 22, 23. They are with the Redeemer in his kingdom, and in a noble consort of spirits sing the song of *Moses and the Lamb, Hallelujah, salvation and glory to our God*. They, blessed souls, have all their wants supplied, all their needful desires satisfied, and their hopes fulfill'd or well secured!

They

SERM. They inherit all things, for God is their portion for ever: Him they now see and know in clear light, and if their faith did not satisfy them, their sight now does, which has cured all their deadness and coldness toward him, and has set all right for ever.

THEY are gone to a state of *perfect knowledge and unstain'd purity*: they are in a near conjunction with *the Father of lights*, that *eternal fountain* of all truth; from him their elevated understandings receive those vigorous rays of divine wisdom, which do both beautify and refresh; the greatest philosophers, who have made the most successful essays upon all the theories of nature, nay, *Solomon* himself, who had wisdom enough to reach from the *cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall*, in all the glory of his wisdom was not like to one of these; he that is least in that kingdom above, is greater than he; there they are, truly, as wise as the angels of God; all their imperfect partial knowledge is done away, because *that which is perfect is come*. They have found the way out of those labyrinths, in which we are maz'd and lost; and sound their joyful *ὑμνα* over a thousand doubts and difficulties, which after all our laborious disquisitions,

Funeral consolations.

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SERM.
XVII

quisitions, do pose and confound us mortals: they have found the happy way of increasing knowledge without increasing sorrow. How many doubts are with them resolv'd! how many mistakes corrected! how many unknown secrets revealed! O glorious and ample prospect, that from the mount *Moriab*, the mount of vision, has open'd itself to their clear and satisfying view! Truly their light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to behold it.

No less is the pleasure of their perfect holiness, or the exercise of their consummate love. There is even now a very sweet relish in the exercises of a devout mind, while with *David* he is but *panting after God, as the hart after the water-brooks*; the soul feels an hidden pleasure in that divine warmth; it is marrow and fatness to it, and renders a day in God's courts *better than a thousand*: but it is a much more noble thing to love as those blessed do, who enjoy and see the God of love, and clasp about that infinite eternal good with the brightest flames of ardent unwearied zeal. How delightful is it to exercise that love in high admirations, and to give it vent in the transports of endless praises! How pleasant to serve so endeared an object, with a mind cured of

SERM. all its infirmities, and disentangled from all im-
 XVIII. pediments! And above all, how satisfying to
 behold in themselves so lively a conformity to
 him, whose matchless excellencies have so ma-
 ny myriads of delightful admirers!

AND is not here great reason why we should
 rejoice for them? does not love teach us to be
 glad at our friend's felicity? Oh, my brethren,
 can we indeed with seriousness contemplate the
 heavenly glory of the saints, so amazing, so
 unspeakable glory, and not be transported
 to think and hope, that our beloved dear friends
 are there? Sure, if with *St. Paul* we had ever
 been taken up into the third heaven, and had
 heard his "Ἀρρητα ῥήματα, things not to be ut-
 ter'd; or if, with *St. John*, we had in vision
 survey'd the *New Jerusalem* in all its glory,
 and heard the charming melody of the hal-
 lelujahs sung in her streets; or had ever be-
 held triumphant saints walking in white robes
 with palms in their hands; I say, sure we
 should be ashamed to weep for them who are
 there. Look up, Christians, and see if these
 be objects of lamentation. What! they that
 have a paradise to dwell in, that have a king-
 dom to enrich them, that have angels to
 converse with, and an infinite God to en-
 joy!

joy! are these to be condoled? No, no, the more we loved them, the more we shall rejoice, because it is so very well with them. Would we indeed recal them from all this bliss and joy unto a partnership of our tears and groans, our sins and darkness? What! from the possession of all those great things, beyond what our eye ever saw, or heart conceived, but yet their eyes do see, and their hearts do rejoice in? Have we such a grief as would dispossess our friends of heaven? Verily, whatever we pretend, this is not from real love, for that principle is not so injurious.

When they were on earth, they oft wished for a Release from this vain life; had they had *wings as a Dove*, they had flown away sooner, and been *at rest*. They oft went up to mount *Pisgab*, as *Moses*, and gave many a longing look towards the promised land; desires and groans were the harbingers they sent before their arrival; and now that they have obtain'd their wishes, we ought rather to congratulate than bewail them; but by no means to wish them back again into the estate that was once so uneasy to them.

We have no reason to think that they look back in their hearts to our *Egypt*, for we our-

SERM. selves find many temptations to desire a dis-
 XVIII. charge, and be gone; and should we be so
 unkind to our delivered friends, as to wish
 them a burden, which ourselves wou'd fain
 throw off?

The truth, in short, is, we quite forget whether they are gone, (either through unbelief or inconsideration) and so, like *Jacob*, we mourn for *Joseph* as lost, when at the same time he is lord over all *Egypt*; or we think of them only with relation to ourselves, and our own want of them, without a regard to their good, else it would not be so hard to rejoice for them: for why should we lament their great deliverance? or, why should we hang *our* harps on the mournful willow, when they have taken *theirs* into their hands in the joyful choir of blessed spirits?

3. This consideration, that *they are gone to the father*, affords us another ground of joy, in that they are gone to the same place, where we ourselves (if such as they) are hastening to. This is what Christ intimated more than once to his disciples, *John* xiv. 3. that they shortly should go to the *same place*, and *same Father*, to possess the *mansions* prepared for them in his great house: and here
 it

it was, that their love might find matter of SERM:
great joy. It is the separation of our friends XVIII.
from us that grieves us; that we and they
must divide into such a distance, as admits no
more sweet and delightful converses: We are
ready to say with *Thomas*, *Let us also go, that*
we may die with him, John xi. 16. or with *Ruth*
to *Naomi*, *Where thou diest will I die, and there*
will I be buried; Ruth i. 17. as being loth to
be parted by death itself. Let us but have
their amiable society, whatever it cost us: this
our desire is in great measure granted; God
will indeed remove them from us, but then
it is to that country and city, where we our-
elves design to settle for ever. They are gone,
but 'tis to the same harbour, which we are
bound to, and are upon our voyage for; nay,
where we ourselves have already cast anchor
by a stedfast hope, though we are not yet land-
ed, as they are. Do we not profess ourselves
to be pilgrims on this earth, and that heaven
is our only home? Is it not your real hope,
that you shall one day take up your rest in that
city of God? If so, whither then could we
wish our friends to be gone but where they are?
Would we not have them to be there, where
we may hope to find them again? We are
F f 2 leaving

SERM. XVIII. leaving this world ourselves, and if they leave it not too, how should we hope to dwell together again? Were they always to have continued here, we could not have staid to enjoy them long; but where they are we hope to find them again, and to enjoy them for ever. That is the place, to which God the great arbiter of our lot has adjourned our next meeting, where there are mansions (not tabernacles) enough; one for *Moses*, one for *Elias*, and another for us, I mean for our holy friends and ourselves too, which our common master has prepared.

WE have this then to comfort us, that we know whither they are gone, and the way we know to follow them; so that there is nothing else to trouble us, but only that we removed not together: and yet if we and they were in a foreign country on earth, how easily could we send them home some weeks before us, and be glad to hear of their safe arrival? It is much the same case, when they go to God before us, while we are following them; so that we are hoping heaven shall bring us together again: there we shall soon meet our dear and pious relations, like the meeting of *Joseph* and his brethren in *Pharaoh's* court, with

with joy and love enough; we shall surely find them somewhere among the multitudes coming either East or West, *Luke xiii. 29.* to sit down with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* in the kingdom of God, whither ourselves hope to be admitted: and this ought to revive our hearts, as something like it did very much affect the * heathen orator, when he cried out as one in an extasy, *O! præclarum diem! &c.* “*Ob! glorious day in deed, when I shall come to that assembly of divine spirits!*” If a Pagan could with so lofty a rapture think and speak of that blessed day, when he expected to meet with the souls of the famous heroes and wise philosophers, (when yet his expectation was only supported by probable conjecture) how much more should it elevate the heart of an assured Christian into the warmest transport of gladness, to think of that day, when he shall meet with the patriarchs and prophets, and all the members of the church of the first-born, and his own endeared friends among them?

And the rather, because that last mentioned text seems to suppose a particular knowledge, who those blessed are that we shall then con-

SERM. verse with, and what relations they stood in XVIII. in this present world; for if *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* shall be then so distinctly known, why not others also? And if they are known to others, surely, it is known to themselves, that they were grandfather, father, and son, who once dwelt together, as heirs of the promise in the same tabernacles on earth; no knowledge nor love shall be lost, but what is imperfect and useless.

WE shall not perhaps carry with us any sensitive ideas of face or features into another world, but shall probably put off these with the body, because they seem useless, since there will be no counterpart of these to answer them, by which to know our friends again in that world; no, not at the resurrection itself; for their bodies will be then wonderfully transformed, not to be known by what they were formerly on earth, in their vile condition: I only say this is *probable*, because I will not pretend to certainty in so dark a case, or to see into the shadow of death; for I know not what subtle vehicle, or fine clothing the soul may carry away from the body, according to many philosophers both Pagan and Christian; nor whether those vehicles
have

have organs of sight, or be objects thereof, nor what figures they will have, nor what ideas or memory we shall retain of past objects to compare them by; but yet I see not what warrant that antient christian writer *Irenæus* had to assert, * that *separate souls carry the likeness and figure of their bodies, so that they may be still known thereby in another world.* However we may justly hope for a knowledge of them some other way, by revelation, information, or mutual discourse, &c. “I must
“ *profess from the experience of my soul, (says*
“ *the excellent Mr. Baxter †) that it is my*
“ *belief that I shall love my friends in heaven,*
“ *that principally kindles my love to them on*
“ *earth; and if I thought I should never know*
“ *them more, and consequently not love them*
“ *after death, I should now love them compa-*
“ *ratively little, as I do other transitory things,*
“ *but now I converse with them with delight,*
“ *as believing I shall converse with them for*
“ *ever.”* No doubt but they who dwelt together here, as heirs of the same grace of life, joining their prayers, shall dwell together there, as joint inheritors of that life, joining their praises. Some not unfitly compare the saints of all ages to a fleet of mariners, all bound for

F f 4

the

* *Con. Har. l. 2. c. 62.* † *Converse with God, &c. p. 79.*

SERM. the same port, tho' some arrive sooner, and
 XVIII. some later; and they, who have been first there,
 welcome those that come afterward with joy
 and great affection: And what though our
 friends have outailed us? it is likely we may
 come in with the next fleet, and meet at
 home, and then our love will be satisfied a-
 gain. Perhaps, ere it be long we may min-
 gle our own ashes with their beloved dust;
 however that be, our souls hope to join in
 the same choir and work with theirs for
 ever, and therefore should rejoice now in
 this hope.

TRUE indeed, we shall no more know
 them after the flesh, in the relation they once
 stood in in this world; There shall be no
 more *marriage, nor giving in marriage*, Luke
 xx. 35. except it be the marriage of the
Lamb, which they are waiting for, and for
 which *the Lamb's wife is making herself rea-*
dy, Rev. xix. 7. When not we, my bre-
 thren, not we, but Jesus Christ himself shall
 be their glorious everlasting bridegroom! And
 as the bridegroom rejoices over his bride, *so*
will he rejoice over them! Isa. lxii. 5. There-
 fore it should greatly pacify us, as it did *Da-*
vid, to say, *We shall go to them*; which is
 much

much better than their return to us: *They have departed from us for a season, that we might receive them again for ever:* SERM.
XVIII.

I MAY add, that this is the most effectual consideration in the world, from whence an affectionate mourner can receive full satisfaction; because it rather supports than suppresses his love to his deceased friend: True love, above all things, has a strong principle of self-preservation; it resists all things that would extinguish it, and abhors forgetfulness; no waters can quench it, it is stronger than death, and will survive its object. Now this consideration of seeing them again relieves and revives our love; it tells us, we may cherish and keep it still, and that it shall have a fresh gratification in the presence of its restored object; we may love on upon a just ground, and may anticipate the pleasures of that eternal society with our dear friends expected above. So that upon this account, in midst of our anguish, we may imagine the angels address to the disciples to be (with some alteration) made to us, *Why gaze ye so, and stand looking after them who are ascended? These same persons, who are taken up from you into heaven, shall ye see coming again.*

SERM. Oh! that we could, like *Abraham*, by faith
XVIII. so see that day, tho' afar off, as to rejoice!

~ This is the way to perpetuate our memory of them, when they return with delight on our minds, and not as a frightful torment. If there be nothing but sadness and terror, it will soon weary us, and make us study some arts of oblivion, whereas we shall very freely repeat a grateful and welcome remembrance.

The useful inferences from this doctrine are as follow.

I. THIS shews us the excellency of Christianity, or how great a blessing the gospel is, which furnishes us with such an antidote, against these temptations to deep sorrow. Indeed it is a comfortable doctrine, which brings life and immortality to light! Which tells us they are but sleeping in Jesus, who have died in him, and helps us to put so mild an interpretation on so grievous a calamity. What a soft notion of dying is this, *viz. A going to the Father*, our gracious, compassionate, heavenly Father! Whatever dubious glances this way we find among some of the sagacious heathen writers, who confess they rather desired, than were able to prove it (as *Seneca* owns,) 'tis certain, they had so
little

little of an assured persuasion of eternal bliss after death, prevailing among them, that the Apostle (in this respect opposing them to Christians) sticks not to describe them thus, viz. *those who have no hope*, 1 *Thess.* iv. 13. but where they had no clear hope, Christians have perfect assurance. SERM.
XVIII.

AND whereas we are apt to be concern'd for the outward tabernacle, those amiable bodies that were the desire of our eyes, and the instruments of conversation, whose very pleasing idea makes many a welcome return to our grieved minds, and which we love to cherish and preserve in a lively remembrance, the gospel answers this also, tho' it will be but of little consideration with wise men; for what are these lumps of clay without the animating principle more to be valued than the comely garments of a beautiful person? The soul was the true subject of those excellent and sweet dispositions, for which we once so admired them.

AND yet even this flesh rests in hope of a blessed resurrection; the great Redeemer is the guardian of their dust; for *this is the Father's will which sent him, that of all which was given him he should lose nothing, but should raise*

SERM. *raise it up again at the last day, John vi. 39.*

XVIII. *Nay, he will change their vile bodies, and will fashion them like to his own glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. He will one day visit their sepulchres with mighty power, when his spirit shall enter those dry bones, and make them to live. He will bring their separated spirits out of that state of widowhood, and reunite them to the body; but not such a corruptible body as we saw them have here. We knew them in weakness and frailty, but he will raise them in power, 1 Cor. xv. 43. We knew them in dishonour base and vile; but he will raise them in glory. We knew it a natural or sensual body, but he will raise it a spiritual: It had not the glory of a star here, but then it shall have the beauty and brightness of the sun, Mat. xiii. 43. O sweet contemplation to think how that corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that mortal so beloved shall put on immortality! And therefore we do not throw them away carelessly, as things never to be look'd after more; but we lay them up in the safe repository of the grave with solemnity and care, as a treasure in store; Because the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God,*

God, and come forth and live; John. v. 28. SERM.
and then some use will be made of these de- XVIII.
posited remains.

AND is this the account the gospel gives of them, who die in the Lord? Is this the case of our deceased holy friends? Then, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where, is thy victory?* Thanks be to God for this gospel; that we and our friends have lived under it, and can die more easily for it. Oh! what a black gulph is death both to the dying and surviving friend, when they see nothing certain beyond the grave and dry bones! but to Christians who see it shine beyond the clouds, there is comfort! there is hope! We part a while, but it is as they who bid good-night, only for a little interval of rest. Thus has the gospel abolished and quite annulled death.

2. How much more may a well-prepared Christian rejoice in his own death, because he has a far greater concern in its advantages than his loving friends! Indeed death is so solemn a business, so important a crisis, the turning point of eternal happiness, or eternal misery, that leads to a judgment so accurate and searching, (the requisite preparation for
which

SERM. which is so strict, and human frailties so many)
 XVIII. the doom is so dreadful, and the sentence so
 decisive and irreversible, that no frame is
 more befitting or safe for poor sinful crea-
 tures to be found in, than that of a penitent
 humility, and a serious awful anxiety about
 the issue of so momentous a concern.

BUT when a Christian hath deliberately
 settled the grounds of his hope, and upon
 impartial search finds the characters of an
 heir of glory, and the uncorrupted testimony
 of his conscience concerning his integrity of
 heart and life; why should he not *rejoice*
with his trembling, even when he is stepping
 over the border of time into a boundless eter-
 nity? Sure it should be a joyful thing to die
 and *go to the Father!* And no doubt but it
 would be so, if he were certain of that; they
 who are thro' humble jealousy apt to cry,
Lord, spare us a little, would then welcome
 death with speed. As for a well prepared
 and assured Christian, who knows, if he were
 absent from the body, *he should be present*
with the Lord; how can he but desire it?
 Why should he, like others, be hanging back
 and craving more delay? Why should he loi-
 ter, when a messenger from heaven calls him
 out

out of this *Sodom*? Rather, he ought to desire to be dissolved, ἀναλῦσαι, to loose from this port, and to go with full sails into the *haven of eternal rest*. It is indeed a rough passage, in which he is sure of the shipwreck of the earthly vessel; but the soul shall land safe in paradise. It is a dark step thro' the valley of death's shadow, but he is led through it by a sure guide, who will shew him *the path of life*; Psal. xvi. 11. why then should he fear any ill? Rather let him say as *Zuinglius*, when he received the mortal wound, *Ecquid hoc Infortunii? What harm is this to me?* Indeed nature shrinks and shivers at the thoughts of untry'd agonies and groans, which we have sometimes seen others labour under. But what tho' it cost us a few sighs and pangs, who would not break his way through one half-hour's pangs into everlasting joys, to have that great sight, viz. the presence of the *God of glory*? This is enough to make the Christian at once both to fight and triumph, while he bids his sorrowful friends rejoice, because *he goes to the Father*.

BUT alas, it is astonishing to see how little of this holy welcome death finds amongst Christians! I doubt the most that the generality of

SERM.
XVIII.

SERM. of men, esteemed religious, attain to, is only
XVIII. to be unwillingly content with heaven, when
ungrateful death will no longer suffer them to stay. How few court his approaches in calm desires! when they have suffer'd an unwelcome shipwreck, they are content indeed to land on the celestial shore, rather than perish; but they had much rather put off the voyage. When therefore they are arrested with sickness or danger, what do we hear, but craving more delay, hanging back, and crying, *Lord spare me a little longer?* Where do we find the spirit of those pilgrims, who having heaven in their eye, *embraced the promise* with joyful arms, and with insatiable desires hastened to arrive there? They valued not their own country; ever since they heard of heaven, they would hear of no home on earth. Where are these children of *Abraham*, these *seed of Jacob*, that stand so affected towards heaven, as to rejoice in quitting their kindred and native earth at God's call? *Heb. xi. 13, 16.* And how should our friends rejoice for us, in what is so unwelcome to ourselves? Let us not act so inconsistently with our principles, as to extol the felicity of our departed Christian friends, and yet be so averse to have
their

their lot. Can we rejoice for them, and yet bemoan ourselves under the same fate? Or is it so well for them, and can it be ill for us *to go to the Father*? Nay, our desires should be so much the greater, because our dear Lord is gone before, and so many of our holy friends also. The departure of every amiable relation or friend to heaven is a fresh invitation to our desires to follow, since it is at once to go both to *the Father*, and to *them* too, which we perhaps have more sensible conceptions of. Were our friends *in hell* with *Dives*, the scripture tells us they would have us entreated not to come to that *place of torment*; but being *in paradise*, no doubt, they as earnestly wish us a share in their joys; and shall not our desires be the same? Let us learn then to converse with death as a friendly thing, which, as the philosopher said of his enemy, may kill us but cannot hurt us. We know where, and to whom it sends the good man; it makes him *absent from the body*, but *present with the Lord*: an exchange, to which he should be most willing!

3. LET this give a check to our inordinate grief for the death of holy friends. Here is the difficulty to put this in practice in a time

SERM. of trial: our love is usually so carnal and
 XVIII. sensual, that we know not how to raise it to
 so rational and spiritual an exercise as this.
 When death has unclasped those mutual embraces of our friends and us, (which nothing but death could do) our passions are soon in such a tumult as *David's*: *Oh! my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O Absalom my son, my son!* 2 Sam. xviii. 33. It is a time when our bowels will sound like a harp within us; when nature can frame itself to no voice but that of lamentation and weeping, and we refuse to be comforted: we cannot forbear *Jacob's* sorrowful moan, *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and all these things are against me!* Gen. xxxii. 36. We have much ado to restrain ourselves from *David's* passionate exclamation, *I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been to me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women,* 2 Sam. i. 26. We can hardly suppress our inward wishes, with *Job*, *Oh! that it were with me as in months past, when my children were about me!* Job xxix. 2, 5. This then is the time when we have need to call in all the aids of our Christian faith
 and

and hope, for calming our disquieted minds: and surely these should signify something with Christians. To what purpose have we the revelation of immortal life, if it be of no use on such occasions? Why have we *more hope* than others, if we have not *less sorrow*? Make not the world believe you think so meanly of heaven, by mourning for those who are gone thither, as tho' this world were better. Rebuke these unreasonable passions; it is their birth-day into glory; tho' there was sorrow when *the hour of travail came*, (when we saw our beloved friends in their pangs and agonies, when we saw pale death *changing their countenances*, and *sending them away*; then we stood round them with sorrow and tears, as if we shared in their agonies, and died with them;) yet now that they are delivered, and remember their anguish no more, we should carry it as sharers in their joy, and believing admirers of their felicity: Thus *David* washed and anointed himself, when it was said, *The child is dead*. *Philo* the Jew tells us, That the great veneration which the *Hittites* expressed to *Abram* in that honourable salutation, *Thou art a mighty prince*, &c. *Gen.* xxiii. 6. was because they saw him bear

SERM. the death of his wife *Sarah* with more magnanimity and moderation, than was usual among them.

PHILOSOPHY itself has often laid these storms, and taught the wise Pagans to triumph over these infirmities of nature; and shall *Christianity* be baffled with them? *Plutarch* tells us of his wife, that when tidings met him on the road that his son was dead, and the company with him came home, they saw all things so serene and easy; that they concluded it was a false report; so calmly and indifferently had she managed herself. Nay, the poor barbarous *Americans* will sing over the remains of their friends, who they believe are gone to the region of spirits, while they recount with joy the little instances of their valour: And shall not *we* with more reason rejoice over ours, while we rehearse the evidences of their piety, and the fruits of their faith, and charity, and victory over the world? It is * *Seneca's* supposition (and may be our firm conclusion) of a good man, *Mortasse quem nos periisse putamus, præmissus est*; He is not lost at death, but only is sent before.

UPON

* Epist. 64.

UPON how little a business of this life do we contentedly and patiently part from our dear associates for some weeks or months? and it suffices us to hear they are well, tho' absent: And shall we take it so very ill, when they are gone (perhaps not much longer) upon so great a business as taking possession of an *everlasting kingdom*? Can we love them, and not wish their happiness? Or can they be happy, and not die?

It may be, they are taken away from *evil to come*; such times may happen as shall make us say, *Blessed are the dead in the Lord, for they are at rest*: When we shall interpret God's meaning in their removal by those words, *Come my people, enter into your chambers and bide yourselves, till the indignation be over-past*, Isa. xxvi. 20. However, let there be never so great prosperity in view, they are gainers by the change in the best times; and the day of *their death*, is better than the day of *their birth*, for they have left a good name for piety and virtue, which is *better than precious ointment*, Eccl. vii. 1. or more fragrant than those *beds of spices and perfumes*, in which persons of eminent worth were laid at their death, or those aromatick ointments,

SERM. with which they were embalmed. 2 Chron. XVIII. xvi. 14. To which, it is like, Solomon alludes, in that expression, intimating that he dies with most honour, whose memory is embalm'd with the savory fruits of a virtuous life.

ALL this is most true, when we can say of our deceased friends, that *they are gone to the Father*, and this on solid grounds. When we have known them by divine grace powerfully bias'd toward God, holiness, and heaven, as the great centre of all their desires and aims; when we have seen them shine with the Redeemer's image in great meekness and humility, great inoffensiveness, and tender goodness towards all; (for let me tell you by the way, this sweet and quiet temper does not endear us to men only, but to God; *It is of great price*, says the Apostle, *in the sight of God*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. so that when God comes to value a person, he makes high account of this meek and peaceable spirit, as being the great ornament of our profession; of which the whole family and others feel the comfortable charms;) when we have found them possessed and governed with a conscientious dread of offending God or man, (per-
haps

haps in some instances too scrupulous) diligent also in the daily duties of secret piety and devotion, with reverence and great seriousness: when we have seen them faithful in all their relative capacities, as therein serving the Lord, as well as men: when they have been eminently mortified to this vain world, to all the gaiety and bravery, the interests, diversions and pleasures of this life; and that in years and circumstances very capable of such temptations; and this because they rather chose *the better part*, which shall never be taken away: when we have beheld their submissive patience, and Christian resignation to God under misery; and after all, great humility in an abasing sense of their unworthiness, and need of mercy; but yet supporting their faith with honourable thoughts of the divine goodness, and a sense of their own sincerity; so as with hope and strong desires to breathe out their departing souls into their Redeemer's hands; welcoming his approaches with, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* When we can thus describe our friends, (and I know very well whom I could thus imperfectly describe) why should we not conclude *they are gone to the Father?* And why should we not rejoice in

SERM. all the comforts of that consideration? How
 XVIII. unreasonable is our immoderate sorrow, when
 all the rest of their friends rejoice? For, as
 themselves rejoice *to go to the Father*, so the
 blessed God their Father has welcomed them
 with joy to their everlasting home: Jesus
 Christ has presented them as his crown and
 joy, without spot or blemish; holy angels and
 spirits congratulate their arrival to their socie-
 ty, and cannot be supposed to rejoice less at
 the consummation of their victorious warfare,
 than at its beginning in their conversion; and
 shall we alone be swallowed up in sorrow?
 Rather let us comfort one another with these
 words, and ascend after them in holy desires
 to be in the same state and place.

FOR I must add, that we can never receive
 the comfort of this argument, unless ourselves
 be in earnest bent towards the same heaven,
 and can truly hope to meet our friends there.
 All who part here, do not meet again in hea-
 ven; and though they who are departed may
 be happy, yet if we never see them again, we
 lose the comfort of such a thought. If we
 must be separated from them by a dreadful
 unpassable gulph; if of us and our friends, us
 and our yoke-fellows, us and our children, it
 be

be found true here, that *one is to be taken, and the other left*; they admitted, and we shut out from heaven: this will make their death to be the beginning of an everlasting separation, never to be healed; only it may be prevented by our serious preparation for the same happy end and state. SERM. XVIII.

Now the account given of that state, (here described by *going to the Father*) sufficiently points out to us, what that requisite preparation is. Since it is to dwell and converse with God as our Father, how necessary is it to such an end, that we here *love and serve him* as our Father with all filial respects? that we bear a lively conformity to his holy nature in our correspondent wills and affections? that we walk and converse with him? that we relish the thoughts of him? and that by frequent approaches to him in acts of holy devotion we may begin the acquaintance which heaven is to perfect? Then may we speak freely of meeting them again, when ourselves are by faith and patience *following them, who are now inheriting the promises*.

4. Finally, Let this excite near relations so to live together, as to afford this ground of consolation to their surviving friends at their
own

SERM. own death. Though at present I may seem
 XVIII. to have been speaking what concerns *myself*
only, yet it concerns *you* to hearken for the
 time to come, when the like case may be
 yours. How surely will death dissolve all
 your relations, and part you and your beloved
 friends? The time is coming, when the now
 desire of your eyes shall become the terror of
 them; when with great anguish of soul you
 shall see all your mutual endearing love, all
 your delightful and pleasant converses, ending
 in dying agonies and ghastly looks, and your-
 selves lamenting over their expiring groans
 and struggles. Oh! Sirs, what can comfort
 you then but this consideration in my text?
 or, what shall comfort your poor relatives
 whom you leave behind you but this, that
 they hope *you are gone to the Father*? Me-
 thinks I pity them, who sorrow without hope,
 who mourn for rebellious prodigals, for wick-
 ed though near relations, who they fear are
 lost in the horrors of an endless night of dark-
 ness and misery, and that the lamp of their
 lives, with that of their hopes, are both gone
 out together.

Oh! that therefore none of you would by
 your negligent, carnal, irreligious lives, be such

Funeral consolations.

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SERM.
XVIII.

a terror to your friends, nor make such a sword to pass through their souls! When you are sick, they tremble and are in pain; and that for two lives at once, that of the body, and the more important life of the soul too. And when you shall die in that case, they will refuse to be comforted; they'll count themselves undone, through fear that you are so: Whereas did they see you *working out your own salvation*, and seeking God's kingdom and righteousness in the first place; could they perceive your penitent return to God, after your long estrangement from him, and that you are for nothing so concerned, as how you may be saved; could they be confident of your pardon and acceptance with God in Christ, oh! how secure and easy would they be! When you shall be smitten with sickness, they will then go comfortably, as the sisters of *Lazarus* did to Christ, saying, *Lord, be whom thou lovest, is sick*: and when you die, they can cheerfully resign you into his safe hands. When it will comfort their hearts to hear you say, *My heart and my flesh fail, but God is my portion for ever*: and to hear such a comfortable farewell from you, as Christ sent to his disciples, *John xx. 17. I am going; but it*
is

SERM. *is to my God, and to your God; to my Fa-*
 XVIII. *ther, and to your Father.* So mighty a dif-
 ference is it to our friends, (much more to
 our own souls) in what condition we live
 and die.

I beseech you therefore, to live together as
 the *heirs of eternal Life*; provoking one ano-
 ther to good works, joining your prayers, and
 giving mutual examples of piety; that so you
 may fit each other for heaven, and leave a testi-
 mony in one another's bosoms, of your since-
 rity towards God, and your meetness for eternal
 glory; that so, whether husbands or wives,
 parents or children, brethren or sisters, die first,
 your surviving friends may trace you to heaven
 in their refreshing thoughts, and lodge you
 there. For *verily they will faint then, unless*
they can believe you are gone to see the goodness
of the Lord in the land of the living. So that
 when they have laid you in the dark grave,
 and the curtains of the night are drawn about
 you, they may entertain themselves with plea-
 sant hopes, that your souls are among the
 saints in light, wrapt up in the embraces of
 endless love and joy: that you are standing
 with the *Lamb upon mount Sion above*, where
 all his redeemed multitudes shall shortly con-
 vene,

vene, in order to that great *marriage-day of the Lamb*; when the glorious bridegroom shall put on all his beautiful ornaments, and appear in his brightest robes, not only with his own, but with his *Father's glory*, Luk. ix. 26. and then shall *they also appear with him* in glory. When heaven shall empty itself of its blessed inhabitants, who shall all come down to be spectators of this great solemnity; ambitious to adorn the triumphs of the mighty *Jesus*, and to augment the magnificence of his appearance. When the spoils of the devouring grave, shall be rescu'd by that triumphant conqueror, and the dead start forth at the sound of his thundering voice, and mighty trumpet. When all nations, high and low, shall answer the summons to his awful tribunal, and with attentive silence wait to hear their final doom. When, *come ye blessed, and go ye cursed*, shall send all to their eternal homes: these to everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. When death and hell, and all such frightful things, shall be cast into the *bottomless lake for ever*. Oh, most glorious hope! Oh, more glorious sight! when it shall once be, as it surely shall. When *the ransomed of the Lord shall return,*
and